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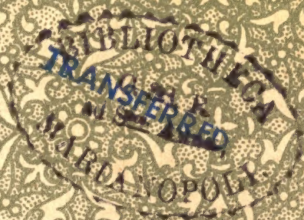
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LIFE  
OF  
MOTHER GAMELIN









MOTHER GAMELIN.

Foundress and first Superior of the Sisters of Charity  
of Providence



LIFE  
OF  
MOTHER GAMELIN  
FOUNDRESS AND FIRST SUPERIOR  
OF THE  
*SISTERS OF CHARITY OF PROVIDENCE*  
BY A RELIGIOUS OF HER INSTITUTE.

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She hath considered a field and  
bought it : with the fruit of her  
hands she hath planted a vine-  
yard.

PROV. 31, 16.

*Translated from the French*

BY

ANNA T. SADLIER

~~~~~

MOTHER HOUSE OF PROVIDENCE,  
MONTREAL, 1912.

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Entered according to the Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year one thousand, nine hundred, by the Sisters of Charity of Providence, at the office of the Ministre of Agriculture, in Ottawa.

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# DEDICATION

TO

MOST REVEREND PAUL BRUCHESI,

ARCHBISHOP OF MONTREAL.

Your Grace,

Our Institute owes its foundation, after God, to your two illustrious predecessors, Bishops Lartigue and Bourget. The first encouraged the charitable designs of our Foundress and blessed her earliest efforts. The second gave the canonical erection to our infant Community, which He himself had planned; he presided over its formation and primal development, by his careful direction.

Following the example of those two holy prelates, Bishop Fabre continued to show the same favor to us by his benevolence and his fatherly solicitude. Since becoming his successor, Your Grace has apparently taken to heart the task of consoling us for his loss, by your repeated tokens of affectionate sympathy and unflagging interest.

We humbly beg, therefore that you will accept this dedication of the Life of our Foundress, respectfully offered, as a proof of our deep gratitude and filial attachment.

Sister Marie Antoinette,  
Superior General.

Montreal,  
Mother House of Providence,  
10th of Feb., 1900.

LETTER OF HIS GRACE,

MOST REVEREND PAUL BRUCHESI,  
ARCHBISHOP OF MONTREAL.

To the Reverend Mother M. Antoinette,  
Superior General of the Sisters of Charity of Providence  
in Montreal.

Reverend Mother,

Closely following upon the "Life of Mother D'Youville," which has just appeared, comes your offering of that of Mother Gamelin, the pious Foundress of your Institute. It is but just that I should express to you, my joy and gratitude. The volume which you have dedicated to me, exhales from every page, the sweet odor of the cloister. The writer has refrained from signing her name. Her work has been done, in the name of all her Sisters ; it was inspired and sustained, as I can well believe, by obedience ; while to that arduous task assigned her, has been brought the same devotedness, so often before employed in the relief of the poor and the sick ; the work is therefore, presented to the public, as that of your whole religious family, and as their sincere tribute of gratitude and filial piety.

I cannot but rejoice, at the eulogies, so worthily and simultaneously pronounced upon those two women who were raised up by God, at different epochs, to accomplish such great things. Both were humble in their origin ; both, Sisters in piety, the spirit of sacrifice and the love of the poor ; both, Foundresses of Institutes, which have been of incalculable benefit to suffering, in its every form, and a signal glory to the Church, and to Canada, Mother D'Youville and Mother Gamelin.

I love thus to associate here, those two venerated names. Both are favored daughters of our soil. Our patriotism, no less than our religion acclaims them, and I most heartily approve, therefore, of the publication of these biographies, which record their virtues and their works. It is not so many years since Mother Gamelin died. Many of her friends in the world or in the Community still survive her. They, above all others, will find a particular charm in the perusal of her life. They will be able to recognize each trifling detail and render testimony to the scrupulous fidelity of the author. May we hope to see some day, as has already been the case with Mother D'Youville, the introduction of your Foundresses' Cause of beatification. I know, Reverend Mother, that such is your hope and that of all your daughters. We may be assured that God will not fail to make known His designs in her regard. The confidence of her religious and of the faithful in Mother Gamelin's power has been manifested, by unmistakable signs, and many cures are recorded as having been gained through her intercession. Without seeking to anticipate the judgment of Holy Church, we may say, that the grave of that humble servant of the poor, has been already covered with glory, as with love and veneration.

However that may be, the works of Mother Gamelin are living before our eyes; they are prospering, extending, multiplying in a marvellous manner and making their influence felt to the farthest confines of North America. This in itself suffices to enable us to recognize in that supremely charitable woman an instrument in the merciful designs of God. Those who have long admired the zeal and activity of her religious family, will be anxious to know what its mother was like. This book will fully satisfy them. It is, in fact, most opportune

and I feel assured that our people will extend to it, as they have already done to the beautiful work of Madame Jetté, a truly sympathetic welcome.

And it appears to me, that one conclusion can be safely drawn from these two biographies : that God who manifested His love by giving us for ancestors, all that was purest and most generous in France, still shows that love, by His choice of apostles, to continue those beautiful works of our origin on the banks of the St. Lawrence.

Receive, Reverend Mother, the expression of my sentiments of devotion in Our Lord.

† Paul, Archbishop of Montreal,  
Archbishop's Palace, Montreal,  
Feb. 19th, 1900.

The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth  
of Mother Gamelin.

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## PREFACE.

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We are now presenting to the public, the "Life of Mother Gamelin, Foundress and first Superior of the Sisters of Charity of Providence."

The name and life of Mother Gamelin are to a certain extent familiar to the greater number of those, who having had more or less intimate relation with her community, have learned something of its origin and of her foundation. But we believe that many of our fellow countrymen, and even some of the friends of her congregation, are ignorant of the very name of the holy Foundress, and still more of her character as a whole, and of the principal facts of her life.

This book will be a revelation to them, of the humble and laborious beginnings of a Community, which in half a century has taken foremost rank amongst the charitable institutions of our country, at the same time that it brings before their eyes, dominating all those events which it records, a noble and beautiful figure, deserving of all their sympathy and reverence. The friends and benefactors of the congregation will no doubt find a sensible satisfaction in becoming acquainted, with the Foundress of a work, which after God and her own daughters, owes much of its development and of its fruits to them.



It cannot be too much deplored, that Mother Gamelin did not leave a greater number of letters. They would have been invaluable, in revealing the inner depths of her soul. But that woman of good works was by no means of a literary turn, neither was she a letter writer. She had little time for writing, and possibly the taste for correspondence was also lacking. She was above all else, a woman of action, of quick and incessant action, suspended by night and sleep, only that it might be rendered more vigorous. Even prayer apparently served, but as a goad and stimulus to persevering and diversified activity. She had neither the temperament nor the inclination for a contemplative life ; as may be seen by the outpourings of her spiritual Journal.

Through the whole course of her existence is perceptible, a singular note of unity and fidelity to herself. It might be summarized like that of certain great men, by that device, "*Qualis ab incepto*," "The same as at the beginning." Her maturity realized the promise of her spring and developed, in strengthening the predominant tendencies of her childhood and youth. Charity shone conspicuously in the first rank, charity especially for the poor and the unfortunate. Her soul was scarcely opened to the light and to the vital movements of the natural and the christian life, when it displayed itself sublimely, as that of a Sister of Charity. In following the mysterious thread which ran through the full and close knit web of her existence, it is indescribably touching to discover at each extremity, two characteristic traits, revealing the inmost depths of her soul.

A tender child charged to distribute the domestic bounties to the poor, she was deeply moved and her whole heart melted into a torrent of tears, at the sight of a beg-



gar's bag, in which her modest gifts were swallowed up as in a gulf, and she hastened to bestow, upon the mendicant, all that she had saved from her own lunches, or from dainties that had been bestowed upon herself. And fifty years later, upon her bed of death, when scarcely able to move her fast stiffening lips, she strove to give a spiritual testament to her daughters, and breathed forth her last breath, between the broken syllables, of that divine name which her whole sanctified life had hymned, "Charity."

The life of Mother Gamelin is then a living lesson of Charity. Were it for that reason alone, it must excite the interest, not only of christian readers, but of all those whose compassion is nobly and sincerely human, regarding with affection, the sufferings and the miseries of the disinherited of this world, that in so doing it may heal them.

They shall see there, how a tender and affectionate heart, finds in the light and the inspiration of faith, a wonderful strength to expend a whole treasure of devotedness, which is at once, measureless and inexhaustible, in the service of the poor and the unfortunate. They shall even be enabled to discover, whether benevolence that is purely natural, philanthropy, altruism—for contemporary unbelief loves to dignify with pedantic names, a virtue that is naturally inferior to what is born and nurtured by the grace of Jesus Christ, — can produce those acts of abnegation and forgetfulness of self, which the single-minded draw from the love of that Man-God, and the assiduous contemplation of the mysteries of Bethlehem and of Calvary.

From that point of view, Mother Gamelin's Journal of Retreat, which the author has thought proper to

give almost in its entirety, in the appendix to her volume, throws a flood of light upon her whole interior life, and permits the reader to assist at the dramatic struggles, the sanguinary conflicts, which she waged incessantly against her nature, to conquer whatever was imperfect and to render her soul more and more conformable to that of her divine model.

These ingenuous and spontaneous outpourings of her heart, in moments of closest self-scrutiny and deepest recollection, prove to what a degree she was tormented by that supernatural thirst for christian perfection which is characteristic of the holiest souls.

We have no doubt whatever, that the reading of these pages, will prove a powerful stimulus, as well as an exceeding great comfort to religious souls who are consumed by the strength and sincerity of the same desire, who have the same rectitude of will, enlightened by a conscience as severe.

It has rarely, in fact, been given to us, in the course of our experience or of our reading, to meet with so perfectly upright a soul.

That admirable rectitude,—if we may venture to say so,—was even more than her extreme kindliness, the conspicuous and most lovable trait in that beautiful character.

Some readers may, perhaps, be disposed to cavil at the exceeding simplicity, we had almost said triviality, of the incidents, composing this biography. To which it may be answered, that these facts are not invented but simply related, and that from their nature, they cannot always nor even ordinarily, be dramatized, to render them attractive. The foundation of a house of charity, of a religious Community is in itself a relatively simple thing even though *it* be not very easy of accomplishment and is carried into execution under difficult circumstances.

Even a complete summary of the events by which it is attended, does not give room for any extraordinary manifestation of the divine action. They take their rise and are linked together, indeed, under the dominion of supernatural laws and forces, but attended, by elements, and by collaboration that is purely natural, and with such an appearance of simplicity and of regularity, that the superficial observer, might be tempted, to find them common place.

God's providential action, is indeed clearly displayed in the foundation of Mother Gamelin, and in the beginnings of her community. It breaks forth at times, into extraordinary happenings that are invested with the character of the marvellous. But such occurrences are rare, like lightnings that rend the cloud, enveloping the Almighty arm of the Author of that nascent work. Sustained by grace, enlightened by faith, the workmen or workwomen, often very humble folk, bind themselves to labor, to perform all their actions, to speak and to pray, like the ordinary run of fervent christians, who are sanctifying themselves in the world by the humble and every day accomplishment of the duties of their state.

No miracles are performed, there are no fine speeches, no striking deeds, but they devote themselves to the daily performance, as simply but as strongly as possible, of that one great thing: to accomplish the ordinary and common actions, often painful in themselves, in a lively spirit of faith, despite the repugnances which they inspire and the sacrifices which they impose. That gives all the interest and value to this as to similar narratives. It is an absolutely true and faithful record of facts, as is shown by its very simplicity. And

## DECLARATION OF THE AUTHOR.

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If in the course of this work, we have employed the title of saint or venerable, and published an account of favors received through the intercession of Mother Gamelin, we declare that we have in no wise, desired to anticipate the judgment of the Holy See, and that we are in all things conformable to the decrees of His Holiness, Pope Urban VIIIth.

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## LIFE OF MOTHER GAMELIN.

FOUNDRRESS AND FIRST SUPERIOR OF THE SISTERS OF  
CHARITY OF PROVIDENCE.

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| 8—           | 14th—        | expansive . . . . .     | expensive     |
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LIFE  
OF  
MOTHER GAMELIN

FOUNDRRESS AND FIRST SUPERIOR OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY  
OF PROVIDENCE

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CHAPTER I

1800—1815

CHILDHOOD.— PRECOCIOUS CHARITY.— EARLY EDUCATION.

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AT the foot of Mount Royal, in the beginning of the last century, stretched a vast domain, which was known as the Fief of Providence. It comprised a portion of that land, upon which the Sister Hospitallers of St. Joseph built the present Hotel-Dieu.

At that period, the city of Montreal formed a species of rectangle, bounded by the River St. Lawrence, De Montigny, St. Hubert and Bleury Sts. and of which the south western side, extended along Notre-Dame and St. Paul Sts. in a double row of houses, with wide spaces between, which formed the St. Joseph Suburbs. Beyond those limits, there was little to be seen, save a few isolated dwellings, inhabited chiefly by poor people, except in the vicinity of the Mountain, where there

was a sprinkling of villas or country houses of the well to do, surrounded by gardens and orchards.

About the middle of the Fief of Providence, above the present Mount Royal Avenue, on a point of land, now occupied by the provincial Exhibition Grounds, stood a modest, two story dwelling of wood, shaded by trees and surrounded by a garden. There was born, on the 19th of February, 1800, our venerated Mother Gamelin.

Her father was Antoine Tavernier ( 1 ), who had long carried on the business of wheelwright, and enjoyed the reputation of being a thoroughly good man, pious, charitable, honest and upright in all the acts of his life. Her mother, Josephite Maurice, was frail and delicate in appearance, but so strong and energetic in character that she brought to her household duties and the education of her children, a zeal and ardor far beyond her strength.

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( 1 ) Julien Tavernier, grandfather of Mesdames Nolan, Cuvillier, and Gamelin and head of the Montreal branch of the Taverniers, and a son of François Tavernier, a wool merchant, and of Marie Marchand, of the parish of St. Jacques, in the city and diocese of Amiens. He came to Montreal as a colonist, at an unspecified date. He was a sergeant in the Chevalier de la Corne's regiment of Infantry. On the 15th of May, 1749, he was married, in Montreal, to Marianne Girouard, who had been born in that city, on the 18th November, 1725, of the marriage of Antoine Girouard and Marie Anne Barre. Antoine Girouard was born at Mont Luçon in Bourbonnais, and was the son of Jean Girouard, Comptroller of the depot of Riom in England, and of Petronille Georgeau, also of Mont Luçon. Julien Tavernier was killed in the month of July, 1756, near Lake Champlain, in one of the expeditions, directed from Carillon, by Messrs, St. Luc and Contrecoeur, against the English posts in the vicinity.

God blessed the union of this truly christian couple. Thirteen children came, in succession, to increase their happiness. Of these, eight died in infancy, while Antoine, Josephite, Julien, François and Emmelie, whose life is now being written, alone survived to their parents.

It seemed as if heaven wished in some sort to forecast the destiny of that child. Her very place of birth, the Fief of Providence, foreshadowed that other providence, which name God was later to bestow upon the work of the venerated Mother, whilst the name of Emmelie which had been given to her in Baptism, seemed to summarize the programme of her whole future life. St. Emily had like her embraced the matrimonial state before entering upon the religious life. But our mother had not like her glorious prototype, the happiness of bringing up her children and preparing them, by her lessons and example, to take their places at her side, on the altars of the Church. (1)

The child was baptized on the day following its birth, in the Church of Notre Dame, under the names of Marie Emmelie Eugene (2), by Father Humbert, a priest of the Seminary of St. Sulpice. Her sponsors

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(1) St. Emily was the mother of St. Basil the Great, whose brothers were St. Gregory Nyssa and St. Peter of Sebaste, and whose sister was St. Macrina.

(2) She was known by the second of these names. We have retained the orthography of Emmelie, which is that of the Roman martyrology and of the Bollandists, although in the baptismal register and that of her marriage, as well as in the baptismal register of her three children it is spelled Emelie.

Author's Note.



were her elder brother, Antoine Tavernier and her cousin german, Marie Claire Perrault. The latter afterwards married Mr. Augustine Cuvillier, a merchant of Montreal, who was intimately connected with the political affairs of the country from 1820 to 1840.

Madame Tavernier, who had devoted herself entirely to the education of her elder children, seemed to lavish a still more tender care and affection upon little Emmelie. Either her maternal intuition had permitted her to discern, in that tender child, the extraordinary qualities with which heaven had endowed her, or some undefined presentiment warned her that the last fruit of her love, the youngest and most frail, would be soon deprived of the sweetness of maternal affection and of the joys of the domestic hearth.

The child responded to the partiality and the solicitude of her mother by gentle-caressing ways, and the most touching attentions. When scarcely four years old, she already strove to help her in her work. "Go and rest," she said to her, "I will take your place," and seizing upon a long feather duster, she began gravely to pass it over the various pieces of furniture. The mother, moreover, encouraged that tendency in the child, striving from her earliest years to inculcate a taste for those household occupations, which the Holy Spirit praises in the portrait of a valiant woman: "As the sun when it riseth to the world in the high places of God, so is the beauty of a good wife, for the ornament of her house." (1)

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(1) Eccl. 26—21.

She also allowed her to have a share, in her charities, thus developing in that childish heart, a great love for the poor, and the effect of those lessons is happily illustrated by the following pretty incident.

Little Emmelie was charged with distributing at the door such food as was set apart for beggars. There was a basket for this purpose, and very often, unknown to any one, the child slipped therein, some fruit or other delicacy, of which she willingly deprived herself in favor of those dear pensioners.

One day, she saw approaching by the steep path which led to the paternal dwelling, a poor old man who advanced very slowly, leaning on his stick. Seizing her basket, Emmelie hurried out to meet him. The old man took off his hat and taking the bag from his shoulders, held it open very wide, indeed, to receive the offered gift. The child eagerly emptied into the bag, the entire contents of her basket. But when she perceived that her whole supply, which then appeared so small, was swallowed up at once, and disappeared in the immense and almost empty gulf of the bag, she could not restrain her tears, and ran back in great distress to her mother, crying : " Oh, mamma, mamma, the bag was'nt full." The mother tried to make her understand, that the beggar's bag was purposely very big, because he hoped to obtain many gifts, and that it would certainly be filled before evening, with sufficient food for his whole family. But the child's tears continued to flow, and that wise reasoning had but slight effect upon her

little heart, for the beggar's bag, continued to be, in her estimation, entirely too large, because she could not put therein all that she possessed. Then she bethought herself of her hiding-place, her treasure, her big white wooden box, in which she had collected berries gathered in the mountain, dainties snatched from her own meals, or some little treat that she was reserving for her brothers and sisters, or some little friends. She gave up all to the poor old man. She brought him to her hiding-place, made him raise the large box and empty its whole contents into the bag ; after which the amiable child was somewhat consoled. The bag seemed less empty, since she had kept nothing for herself, and her tears were dried by the sweet sunshine of charity, which had thus illuminated her heart.

The precocious charity was to become the dominant virtue of our venerated Mother. It was the inspiration of her whole life, of all her works, and of that foundation which was to render her name immortal.

If the lessons and example of her pious mother had tended to develop that virtue in her childish heart, the trials which so prematurely came into her life, also disposed her to compassionate the sufferings of her neighbor and to relieve them. Sorrow accepted and sanctified by christian faith, is a source of virtue ; it is the parent of strength, courage, patience, the spirit of sacrifice and submission to the will of a just and merciful Father, who chastises only to purify, and tries but to sanctify. She had an ever increasing faith in His Providence, that reserves a happier to-morrow for the afflic-

tions of to-day, and warns His children to have no overweening anxiety for the evils and the miseries to come.

God always reserves the severest, and often precocious, trials for the highest vocation, and one which is to be most fruitful in the works of life. Our venerated Mother could not then escape that law, and the cross very early set its seal upon a life which was destined to great spiritual fecundity.

She was only six years old, when she met with her first sorrow, in the loss of her father and mother, who died within a short time of each other.

In dying, the mother confided her youngest child to the care of a sister-in-law, Madame Joseph Perrault, who was a widow, in comfortable circumstances. The latter's four children received their cousin as a sister, sent to them by heaven, and they strove by their kind attentions and affectionate care, to compensate the poor orphan for the sweetness of domestic joy. Her aunt was a woman of sense and character, with a mind profoundly christian. To continue the maternal education, on the lines in which it had been begun, she had only to bring up her niece as she was bringing up her own children. She found, moreover, in Emmelie's happy disposition and docility, a ready response to her efforts and loved to call her "the angel of the family".

Some years later, Emmelie was confided to the Sisters of the Congregation de Notre Dame, whose boarding school, the only one then existing in Montreal, was situated on St. Jean Baptiste St. She there continued the various studies which she had begun at home. We



have been unable to procure the date, or any other details, regarding her stay at the convent. We only know that she made her First Communion while there and speedily won the affection of her teachers.

The education of young girls in the world, was not at that time, what it is at present. The studies were neither so extended nor so complicated, and the Convent term, was not prolonged beyond a very few years. Such a course of instruction did not perhaps, meet all the exigencies of an elaborate education, but it was proportioned to the requirements of Canadian society at that epoch. It justly excluded from the curriculum and from the discipline of the boarding school, all pretentious or expansive superfluities. The young girls were educated, with the paramount purpose, of making excellent christians and accomplished housewives. Our venerated Foundress received no other education than that which has been here indicated; and though the ordinary course of studies, was in her case considerably abridged by the will of her aunt, who soon brought her home, it does not seem as if the formation of her character or of her judgment, in any wise, suffered.

We have no precise information as to the length of her stay at the boarding school of Notre-Dame. She always preserved an affectionate remembrance of her teachers, whom she spoke of as her mothers. The latter, on their part, never ceased to display an affection for her, of which they gave many touching proofs to our infant community.

## CHAPTER II

1815—1823

MADemoiselle TAVERNIER'S YOUTH.—HER CHARACTER.—  
HER ATTACHMENT TO HER FAMILY.—HER LOVE FOR THE POOR.

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ON her return to her aunt's house, Mademoiselle Tavernier endeavored to repay the debt of gratitude she had contracted towards that second mother of her childhood, by her docility, her devotedness and the most affectionate attentions. She never ceased to render her such offices as were dictated by the sincerest filial piety; and if she occasionally left her for a longer or shorter period, it was only to fulfil some still more urgent duties of charity or devotion to some other member of the family. Thus, at the age of eighteen, she was called to assume the direction of the household of her brother, Antoine Tavernier, who had just lost his wife. She acquitted herself of these duties, for the space of a year, with much zeal and intelligence, giving evidence of those domestic virtues and that practical knowledge, to which she had been trained by her early education. Her brother's mourning precluded all worldly festivities, and permitted the young girl to devote all her leisure time to visiting and taking care of the poor, in whom she continued to be tenderly interested.



Every morning, after having assisted at Holy Mass, she went to visit some sick person; and toward evening she set out again, basket on arm, to distribute provisions to the poor, always accompanying her gifts with kind and sympathetic words, that comforted the hearts of the afflicted. Her reputation for charity, quickly spread beyond the circle of her early pensioners, and she soon drew round her numerous other needy ones, whom she always received with a gracious and delicate kindness.

The better to provide for their wants she set apart a small room adjoining the kitchen, which she called her private office. She turned this into a dining-room, reserved for their exclusive use; and they sat round a large table which, she christened "the table of the king", where she waited on them with tenderness and respect. She took upon herself the full charge of this apartment, sweeping it and washing the dishes which were used by her "favored friends", whose frequent visits were by no means agreeable to the servants.

The grateful prayers of these unfortunates, no doubt, obtained for her many of those graces, by which her vocation was ripened and developed.

Her brother having married again, she returned to her aunt's house, where was then living, her cousin, Mrs. Nolan, who had been a widow for a couple of years. ( 1 ) As she was a good deal older than Emmelie,

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(1) Her husband, Major Maurice Nolan, had been killed in an attack on Sackett's Harbor in 1812. His widow was one of the most devoted cooperators of our saintly Foundress and one of the faithful friends of our nascent work.

Madame Perrault, who was growing old and infirm, left to her thenceforward, the entire care and direction of her niece.

At nineteen, Mademoiselle Tavernier made her debut in the world. Her portrait at that time, gives us a fair idea of her fine features, her air of distinction, erect figure, glowing complexion and large, brilliant eyes. Her manners were engaging ; she was natural and simple, with a sprightly humor, great frankness and an amiability, that was cordial and ever ready to oblige. Needless to say, that she was very popular in society and made many friends.

Soon after her return to her aunt's, she was invited to pay an extended visit to one of her cousins. The latter was an orphan like herself and had also found in Madame Perrault's compassionate and affectionate heart, a veritable providence, for the years of childhood and youth. This was Mademoiselle Julie Perrault, who had recently married Mr. Joseph Leblond, a merchant of Quebec. The young woman was very lonely in that strange city, where the hospitality and attractive qualities of a society which had preserved the best traditions of old France, could not console her for being separated from her own people.

Madame Perrault and Mrs. Nolan yielded to the entreaties of their exiled relative and Mademoiselle Tavernier, from her beloved aunt to fulfil that new duty of charity.

She was rewarded for her sacrifice, by the friendship of her cousin and the enjoyment which the pleasures of society may reasonably offer to a young girl of that age, lively in disposition and with a mind still new to all impressions, provided she does not sacrifice the claims and the duties of virtue, to the allurements of inordinate love of pleasure.

The life of the world must be always a snare for the christian soul. Many receive mortal wounds there. A great number of others find that it impairs their fidelity and the delicacy of their intimate relations with God. But those who have firmly and deliberately made choice of His service, will keep their hearts steadfast, even amid the pleasures that may temporarily disturb and agitate them, and their infidelities, in His regard, will be neither serious nor of long duration.

St. Francis of Sales, in his " Introduction to a Devout Life, " illustrates this truth, by a charming similitude, for the accuracy of which from the standpoint of natural history, we do not pretend to vouch. " As the mother pearls, " he says, " live in the sea, without absorbing even a drop of salt water ; and as around the Chalidonian Islands, there are springs of very sweet water in the middle of the sea ; and as certain insects, fly into the flames without scorching their wings ; so may a strong and constant soul, live in the world without absorbing any worldly humors ; find streams of sweet piety amid the bitter waters of the world ; and fly through the flames of earthly concupis-

cence without, scorching the wings of holy desires for a devout life." (1)

Mademoiselle Tavernier lived in the world after this fashion, and the worldly pleasures wherein she never took an excessive part, did not seem to impair her sentiments of lively and solid piety. This may be judged by some extracts from the regular correspondence, which she kept up from Quebec, with her excellent cousin, Mrs. Nolan, who had been charged by her aunt, to watch over her conduct and regulate her expenses.

These are certainly not the letters of a worldling. She took the interest which any young girl might take in the amusements of the family and of the society, into the midst of which she was thrown. And if she had sometimes to justify herself, from the somewhat severe reproaches of her austere cousin, she did it in such a manner as to fully exonerate herself from the frivolity which an over solicitude had attributed to her.

These letters wherein she relates the ordinary happenings of her daily life, reveal to us the candor and simplicity of her soul. While giving us an account of the innocent pleasures in which she took part, they show us at the same time her fidelity to her habits of piety, and the generous sacrifices which upon occasions, she imposed upon herself.

We choose these extracts, despite their little real importance, to give some idea of the manner of life she was then leading, and what were her real sentiments.

“ Quebec, January 14th, 1820.— I have long put off, my dear cousin, the pleasure of writing to you. You stand in the place of my mother, and it is to you that I must now address myself. Believe, however, that my submission to you, comes from the heart, and that it is not merely the effect of that friendship which I feel for you...

“ There is no news to tell you. Mr. X. is not here ; he went away about six weeks ago, but he is expected back very soon. I will give you some news of him in my next letter. Everybody insists on marrying me to him. I do not know who could have started such reports. I should like to put an end to them, but I cannot do so. ”

“ Quebec, January 18th, 1820.— We cut the cake at the house of Mr. Leblond, the lawyer. Mr. Perrault was king ( 1 ) and one of the Misses X... was Queen. He would'nt show her the least attention, so that the poor young girl was left there in confusion. My poor cousin was not at all gallant. They joked him very much about his Queen. He did not seem to appreciate his honors, and was vexed that they had been thrust upon him!”...

Quebec, July 12th, 1820.— I was glad to get your letter, in spite of the severe lecture which it contained.

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( 1 ) The custom remains in French Canadian families on the Epiphany or Kings' Day, of having a large cake, in which is placed a ring and a bean, for the amusement of the young people. This being cut, those drawing respectively one or the other, are King or Queen.



I know you are my best friend and the one most capable of advising me... However, you must not believe all that is said about me... As for week day Mass, I miss it very rarely. Sometimes when I have been up a great part of the night with the baby, so as to let Julie rest, I cannot get up early enough for Mass. One of the servants is very ill, so that you may suppose, as there is only one girl, I have to help a great deal. It is true that I go out a good deal. As I am a visitor every one invites me. But at this season, there are not so many parties. However, there was a very large one at Mr. Leblond's the lawyer, to entertain the newly married couple. There must have been about fifty people there. We enjoyed it very much. A great many others want to entertain them, and Julie will also have to do something. It is very hard for me to refuse, when Julie and the rest of the family are going. However, I made a promise not to dance, and I hope to keep it all winter.

“ It is said that Father Lartigue will soon be made Bishop, and that he will probably reside in Quebec. I shall be very glad, since Father Dufresne is going away to be a parish priest, and I shall take Father Lartigue for my director. Once, I am under his direction, you will not have to trouble yourself any more about me.

“ Quebec, August 31st, 1820.— I must tell you that a gentleman from Lower Town has paid me a good deal of attention. It is the same one of whom Julie told you. Mr. Leblond, and Julie have been very civil to him. Do not begin to think, however, that there is any ques-



tion of marriage between him and me, for fear you might be disappointed, as you were last Winter.

“ Quebec, February 19th, 1821.— It is long since I have had the pleasure of writing to you and just for want of leisure, which is rare at this season. Julie is preparing to give a large dinner-party in honor of my birthday. When I think that I am going to be twenty one years old ; it frightens me to grow so old. Do you know that here, in Quebec, I am considered a wonderful cook ? They say there is not my equal for pastry, and especially puff paste. So you see what progress I must have made since I came to Quebec. There are to be several large parties before the end of the Carnival. There is nothing talked of except amusement.”

It was probably during that same year that Made-moiselle Tavernier returned to her aunt and cousin.

In the month of April, 1821, she had the sorrow of losing that excellent aunt, who had replaced her own mother, with such truly maternal kindness. All her life, she preserved, a sacred and tender remembrance of her.

No doubt, the young girl now resumed, with her cousin, the quiet and industrious life, which she had led at her brother's before going to Quebec. Her little wordly dissipations do not seem to have left a very deep impression upon her heart, to judge from the following passage in a letter written, to her amiable cousin in Quebec, where the thought that was latent in her mind of the religious life, and the first hint of a vocation are openly revealed.

“ Montreal, June 18th, 1822.— You had a great deal to say, my dear cousin, about the Quebec gentlemen, but know that I do not concern myself with them any more. I spent the whole of yesterday, with the Gray Nuns, on the occasion of Eulalie's taking of the habit, ( 1 ) and I enjoyed myself very much. All the religious received us with so much kindness and courtesy. Therefore, let me whisper, that ever since then, I feel quite a vocation. I hope it will continue, and that I shall end by surprising you, once for all. Don't speak of this to any one, although it is the exact truth. Yes, I renounce forever, your gentlemen, as well as the world. I will become a nun, in the Autumn. ”

But the Autumn of 1822, was not the time fixed for her entrance into the Promised Land, of whose pure and holy joys she had been vouchsafed a glimpse. It was God's will, to lead her by a much longer and more devious path to the work for which she was destined. A more complete and more varied experience of life, with trials more numerous and more painful, were to serve as the remote, but more perfect preparation, for the foundation of her Community.

After the example of other holy Foundresses, she had previously known the joys, the sorrows, and the

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( 1 ) Mademoiselle Eulalie Lagrave, who took the habit on the 17th June, 1822, and was professed on the 23rd, Dec. of the following year. She was one of the four Foundresses of the Red River Mission at St. Boniface, where she died Aug. 4th, 1859.

Archives of the Gen. Hosp. of Montreal.

duties of conjugal life. In the married state, as during her widowhood and in the religious life, she never ceased to give an example of the purest virtues. From her personal trials, she learned the secret of a deeper compassion for sufferings which she had herself experienced, and was enabled to console them more tenderly and effectually.

### CHAPTER III

1823—1828

MARRIAGE OF MOTHER GAMELIN.— DEATH OF HER CHILDREN  
AND OF HER HUSBAND.

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Mademoiselle Tavernier was twenty-three years of age, at the time of her marriage, June 4th, 1823, to Mr. Jean Baptiste Gamelin, of Montreal, to whom in the marriage register, is given the title of burgher " ( bourgeois ) ". This in the language of the time, was a proprietor living on his income.

Mr. Gamelin was at that time fifty years of age. He had been already betrothed twice before without being able apparently to make up his mind to marriage. The second time, he was at the very foot of the altar and just before pronouncing the irrevocable " Yes, " he had taken back his word. Was it the natural indecision of his character, some oddity of disposition, or some secret motive which determined this withdrawal? Tradition does not say. But there is no doubt whatever,



MOTHER GAMELIN,  
at the age, of twenty-two years



that if he experienced any hesitation, in uniting his life with that of Mademoiselle Tavernier, he never regretted his decision, for their marriage brought perfect happiness to both.

It may be a matter of astonishment, that Mademoiselle Tavernier should have given her hand to a man of that age, who was moreover, distinguished neither for his education, nor for any very remarkable personal qualities. She had had, as it appears, an opportunity of refusing other offers. It must be presumed that these suitors lacked some of the essential qualities, which she desired in a husband, and that her heart was not deeply enough touched, to pledge her life to any one of them. Perhaps, also she was inclined to accept this last proposal, by the desire of having a home of her own, and a freer and more independent existence, than that which the somewhat rigorous supervision of her cousin, Mrs. Nolan, permitted. Mr. Gamelin, was moreover, a very worthy man and an excellent christian. In uniting her life with his, Mademoiselle Tavernier had the certainty that her sentiments and her practices of piety, would be shared by her husband, and especially her tender charity and devotion to the poor, towards whom he had shown himself most compassionate.

In her new abode, the young wife, was able to gratify her very decided taste for solitude and the beauties of Nature. As a child, she had loved to wander amongst the shady paths, surrounding her father's dwelling; at her cousin's she had found, once again, the freshness of the woods, and the charm of the country



in a large garden, planted with trees. It was situated just at the back of the house, whence its wealth of verdure, merging into the green undulations of other gardens, and other parks, went to lose itself in the thickly wooded slopes of Mt. Royal.

Mrs. Nolan's house might still have been seen about a quarter of a century ago, occupying the ground upon the corner of St. Catherine and St. Urbain Sts. where stood for some years, the brick rotunda, whither people flocked to admire the Cyclorama of Jerusalem, painted by Philip Poteaux. Of humble appearance, built of rough and unhewn stone, with its little gallery in front, it was,—on that side of St. Catherine St.—the last house in the St. Lawrence Suburbs. Very soon after that, came the open country, dotted with country houses, or modest villas, which had little of the grandeur or the elegance of those sumptuous residences that now adorn the Mountain slopes.

Mr. Gamelin's dwelling was a low, double house, built of wood, just at the beginning of St. Antoine St. and which now bears the number 26. Its sharply defined character of antiquity is in marked contrast to the modern, though very humble appearance of the adjoining houses. In those days, it was quite isolated in the middle of a beautiful garden. Almost directly facing it, was a large piece of ground covered in great part by an orchard, and extending upwards to the top of the hill now occupied by St. Catherine St.

Mr. Gamelin drew a considerable part of his income, from the products of that orchard, planted with apple

trees, which bore the super-excellent "*fameuses*" the price of which was higher than at present, and great quantities of which were exported to England. The young wife took great delight in walking or working during the fine weather, in the shade of that fine domain.

She enjoyed, in fact, some years of the purest happiness, in the semi retirement of St. Antoine St. dividing her time between her husband and little children, the society always dear to her of her own family, the friends of her childhood and her beloved poor. The latter soon learned to knock at the door of her new residence and to solicit there, the alms which her charity and the wealth of her husband enabled her more abundantly to bestow.

This happiness was, however, soon overshadowed by the death in quick succession of two of her children, who were taken from her three months after their birth. Her husband, himself, succumbed after a long illness on the 1st October, 1827, a little more than four years from the time of their marriage. He was bitterly mourned by the young widow, who had lavished upon him, the most tender and devoted care. He had always shown towards her the utmost kindness and delicacy. A year later, she lost her third child who was born some months after his father's death. Her domestic happiness was thus completely overthrown.

She was left alone at the age of twenty-eight, parted thus from those dear ones, in whom her heart was

centred, and the memory of whom, during the whole course of her life, caused burning tears to flow. We shall see her later, when clothed with the religious habit, sacrificing, at the suggestion of her director and with indescribable anguish, the last visible tokens of those legitimate affections.

These heavy losses were the beginning of her vocation. She found thenceforth in works of charity, consolation for her sorrow, and an outlet for her rich treasures of affection and the devotion of her heart.

It was her director, Father Breguier de Saint Pierre, who led her along that desolate way. He opened up to her a new source of consolation, and of piety, in the devotion to the Seven Dolors of Our Blessed Lady, which developed with the years, and became later on, one of the chief devotions of her Institute.

In that same year, ( 1828 ) wrote she in her Journal of 1850, " Father Saint Pierre made me a present of a picture of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, and every day, I went to pray before that Image, asking for courage to bear, after her example, the crosses and the sacrifices that our good God sent me in the world. "

" The greatest, at that time, was the loss of a beloved husband and a dear child, for whom I weep every day. My own heart had been pierced by a sword of sorrow, and I could find no greater consolation, than to meditate before that picture, on the Dolors of my Mother. "

## CHAPTER IV

1828—1835

WIDOWHOOD OF MOTHER GAMELIN. — BEGINNING OF THE WORK OF PROVIDENCE. — THE HOUSE IN ST. LAWRENCE ST. AND THAT IN ST. PHILIPPE ST. — TRIALS AND DIFFICULTIES. — PROVIDENTIAL HELP. — MGR. LARTIGUE. — THE LADIES AUXILIARY. — MADEMOISELLE MADELEINE DURAND.

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**M**r. Gamelin left everything to his wife. In that universal bequest, he had included a singular gift.

Some years previous to his marriage, he had undertaken the care of a poor idiot named Dodais. During his last illness, he was troubled about the future of this unfortunate. One day he said to his young wife : " Take care of him in memory of me and of my love. " His wife promised and kept her word.

" All who have seen that poor idiot, " say the Annals, " can testify how disgusting he was to the merely natural eye. He was unable to do the smallest thing for himself, and only capable of uttering confused and unintelligible sounds, was scarcely even conscious of his own existence. Madame Gamelin, accepted this legacy as a gift from God. She lodged the poor creature comfortably, in a little house, adjacent to her garden, and to be certain that nothing was wanting to him she brought thither his mother, thus by the same charitable act, rescuing her from indigence. Might not this be regarded as the humble and remote beginning, that

was to find so great a development in the Community she was later to found? Madame Gamelin visited her guest very frequently and lavished upon him all the care that the most delicate charity could suggest. ( 1 )

Heaven deigned to reward her touching devotion. The idiot had a lucid interval before his death, which sufficed to acknowledge his debt of gratitude to his benefactress. He said to her in a perfectly intelligible voice, " Madame, I thank you for all your kindness to me. I am dying ; I am going to heaven ; I will pray for you." Then pointing with his wasted hand to his mother, who stood near, he added, as if recommending her : " That is my mother." He died a few moments after, at the age of thirty years. "

Madame Gamelin never told any one of this extraordinary occurrence except her confessor, Father Breguier de Saint Pierre, and later Mgr. Prince. The latter only related it after the death of his penitent.

The charity of Madame Gamelin inclined her especially towards the aged, and particularly old and infirm women. In her visits to the homes of the poor, she had frequently seen those poor, old creatures, relegated to some corner of the house, where they were forgotten, and though incapable of taking care of themselves, often spent whole days alone, while no one even thought of bringing them any food. Her compassionate heart was always deeply afflicted, at the sight, and she

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(1) A picture at the Mother House, by one of our Sisters, reproduces that touching Scene.



often pondered in her own mind, over the best means of alleviating so much suffering. Providence was not long in suggesting a remedy.

Before giving fuller scope to her pious attraction for the service of the poor, she sold some of the orchards which she owned in the St. Antoine Suburbs and went back to live with her cousin, Mrs. Nolan. On the advice of her director who assured her that such was indeed the will of God, she had recourse to Father Claude Fay, a priest of the Seminary, and parish priest of Notre Dame,—the only parish, then existing in Montreal,—to procure for her, in the vicinity of her own dwelling, a house which should be suitable for the accomplishment of her charitable design. The latter hastened to place at her disposal, the ground floor of a small parochial school, directed by the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, and situated on the corner of St. Lawrence and St. Catherine Sts.

On the 4th March, that modest refuge was opened to the charitable widow's beneficiaries. And to make it very evident that the work was, indeed, for the benefit of the aged, the first person to be admitted, was a widow named St-Onge, one hundred and two years old. Some fifteen other old women, none of whom were less than fifty, were admitted soon afterwards.

Madame Gamelin visited them every day. She attended to all their wants, and gave them some short, pious reading, while by a word, or even a smile, she often adjusted the differences that arose amongst them.



It was a touching sight to see that young woman, endowed with all the charm that virtue lends to natural gifts, indifferent to the raillery or criticism of others, making herself the servant of the poor, rendering them the most menial services, and asking alms for them in the name and for the love of Christ Jesus.

Many were the efforts made to turn her from that way of life which was considered extravagant ; numerous were the objections against that charitable undertaking, and rude indeed, were the trials and contradictions of all sorts that she had to encounter. But nothing could succeed in turning her from that generous enterprise, nor in shaking her constancy. It must not be supposed, however, that she remained indifferent to all those representations that were made to her, or that she did not suffer from the natural repugnances and severe, interior struggles, which her zeal and charity occasioned. She had not as yet completely broken with the world. It was neither easy for her to forget nor to be forgotten. Her heart was still wavering and undecided. But when the decisive moment came in that struggle, an irresistible force captivated her will. Grace triumphed and no longer permitted her to sacrifice to the world, a life which God claimed entirely for His work. " Without suffering, " says the Imitation, " there is no love. " In Madame Gamelin, was already visible, that characteristic, the true love of God, which was to accompany her through life. It was about that time that she refused a second marriage which would have secured for her, a considerable fortune, with



VIEW OF THE HOSPICE  
on St. Lawrence Stand, that of St. Phillippe.



an enviable position in the world. From thenceforward, she more clearly understood the designs of God upon her, and abandoned herself thereto without reserve. She drew her strength and courage from prayer, and particularly from meditation on the Passion of Our Lord and the Sorrows of His Mother, which continued to be her favorite devotions, all through her life.

" I do not understand, " she used to say, " how any one can hesitate to make a sacrifice, after having contemplated the sufferings of the Man-God and the Dolors of a Virgin Mother. "

She made the Stations of the Cross every day with her old women. After the Crucifix, the first object that adorned the bare walls of the little house, in St. Philippe St. was the picture of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, which had been given her by her confessor, Father St. Pierre.

Mgr. Lartigue, who had known Madame Gamelin, since her childhood and had never lost sight of her, held her in singular esteem. He visited her little Asylum and doubtless foreseeing the destiny which God reserved for her, watched with interest her progress in virtue. The character of his direction, may be gathered from the following incidents.

Knowing the natural vivacity of his friend, he said to her one day, employing the familiar form of address, (1) which, indeed, he did with almost every one : " One

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( 1 ) The *tutoiement* or use of the pronoun in the second person singular, which in French, is the form of address to children or inferiors.

who is as quick and impatient as you are, should learn to put water in the wine." A lesson, which was not lost upon her.

Another day the prelate, mindful, perhaps of a similar expression employed by St. Francis of Sales, to St. Jane of Chantal, saw on her finger, a valuable ring, to which she was much attached because it was a gift from her husband.

"Are you thinking of marrying again?" he asked her, coldly.—"Oh, no, my Lord," the young woman answered, in some surprise, at the question. — "Well then," asked he, "why do you wear that jewel on your hand?" Without the slightest hesitation, Madame Gamelin removed the ring, and handed it to one of her ladies: "You can raffle it," she said, "for the benefit of the poor."

That act may, perhaps, appear trifling, in comparison with certain other acts of more resplendent generosity, which signalized the life of our venerated mother, but, of such little sacrifices, were made up the merits of the saints; as modest pearls, they were mingled with the brilliant diamonds of their crown. That incident is moreover illustrative of the generosity and prompt obedience of Madame Gamelin who rarely recoiled from a sacrifice.

Meanwhile, the work for aged and infirm women continued to grow. The ground floor of the school on St. Lawrence St. became too small to afford adequate shelter to the large family by which it was already



crowded. Madame Gamelin, moreover, began to feel the need, of more constant and more immediate supervision.

In view of the limited resources of the house, she sometimes, permitted some of the old women to ask alms from ladies whom they had formerly served. These efforts were, however, attended, by certain inconveniences, and created ill feeling. For each one, believed herself to have a proprietary interest in the alms that she received, and Madame Gamelin was often obliged to interfere for the restoration of peace.

That she might the more effectually watch over the good order of the house, she resigned herself to the sacrifice of her own home, and took up her abode with her charges. With that end in view, she rented two adjoining houses on St. Philippe St. and installing her old women in one, reserved the other for her own use. A door of communication permitted her to enter whenever it was necessary for the maintenance of order, or to exercise supervision. In that way her task was rendered more difficult, and her expenses were increased.

Her refuge, which soon counted thirty inmates, was already a considerable work, in view of her slender resources, for she had to provide for all expenses of rent, heating, food or clothing. It often happened that when she knew not where to turn, her mind harassed with anxiety, she asked herself, if she had not presumed too much upon her own strength and tempted Providence, by venturing upon a work, the future of



which was so uncertain. But God who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field, never withheld His help from her.

One winter day, amongst many others, when she had bought some loads of wood, not a single cent remained with which to provide dinner for the household, which had eaten the last morsel of bread that morning. A prey to the liveliest anxiety, she went into Notre Dame Church and prostrating herself before the altar, shed abundant tears: "Lord," she said, "dost Thou not know, that thine old people have nothing to eat?" Then feeling assured that the God of the Eucharist had heard her petition, she plucked up her courage, and drying her tears, she set out for the market, with the intention of asking alms. Presently, an old man of venerable appearance, came towards her and asked: "Are not you that Madame Gamelin, who takes care of the poor?" And when she replied in the affirmative he gave her, twenty-five Louis (1), almost a hundred dollars, and before she had time to thank him he was gone. (2)

Will any one refuse to see in such an occurrence, an intervention of Providence?

Madame Gamelin, about that time, hit upon the expedient of forming a society of ladies, who should

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(1) A Louis is nearly four dollars, or about \$3.80.

(2) This fact has been attested by various persons of the world, and by many of our Sisters who heard it from the Foundress herself.

assist her in visiting the poor at their homes, and in the daily collections necessitated, for the support of the Asylum. Madame Gamelin had won the confidence of every one. By this time, even those who had shown themselves most critical at the beginning of her work, had been silenced by her perseverance and her success. It was felt that she was but fulfilling a providential mission. At thirty years of age, she became the counsellor and friend of persons of every age. They willingly profited by her lights, and listened to her words, with respect and confidence. Later, amid the manifold cares and occupations of an extraordinarily laborious life, that same justness of mind and eminently practical common-sense, were proved, by the deference always displayed towards her views and opinions. So that after the most mature deliberation, she was sure to carry off all the suffrages.

The society was soon formed. It was composed of nine ladies, her relatives and friends. These were, Mesdames François Tavernier, E. R. Fabre, Maurice Nolan, Augustine Tullock, R. Saint Jean, Paul Joseph Lacroix, Joseph Gauvin, Simon Delorme and Julien Tavernier. Thanks to their assistance, Madame Gamelin was enabled to materially improve the condition of her poor, old women.

Time has not laid its destructive hand upon that association of the Foundress' first auxiliaries. Growing with the years, it has passed the half century mark. It still

exists stronger and more flourishing than ever in the society of the Ladies of Charity. May such beautiful examples be, indeed, perpetuated, from generation unto generation, until that day when our auxiliaries and our benefactresses of every time, shall be united with us forever, in the abode of eternal felicity.

The following touching incident illustrates the delicate attentions, which these ladies showed to their humble pensioners and the part which they loved to give them in their family festivals.

When Madame Julien Tavernier, who was a sister-in-law of Madame Gamelin, celebrated the wedding of her only daughter, after the intimate gathering of the family and friends, she lent a flavor of christian charity to the memory of those days of happiness, by giving a banquet to the old people of the Asylum, in honor of the young couple. The whole family assembled there while the newly married couple made it their particular pleasure to serve those guests of charity with their own hands. Such holy loved feasts recall the pious repasts of the early christians, when rich and poor ate the bread of fraternal charity at the same table. Hallowed thought which thus blended the gratitude and the prayers of the suffering members of Jesus Christ, with the hope and the promise of a new christian household.

The epidemic of cholera caused terrible ravages in 1832-1834. It decimated whole families, and made hundreds of widows and orphans. The city was plunged into mourning and consternation. The rich took refuge

in the country or in distant cities, but the poor, who were forced to remain in their miserable dwellings, succumbed in great numbers. A fine field was thus offered to the charity of Madame Gamelin, who fairly multiplied herself in striving to bring help and consolation to all.

One day, when in a miserable garret, she had just received the last sigh of a poor woman, whose husband lay dead at her side, a public official entered to take away the corpses. Six little children surrounded the funeral bier whence their father had been removed, and uttered the most heart-rending cries. Madame Gamelin mingled her tears with theirs, and brought them back with her to the Asylum, where she kept them until they were at an age to be placed out.

A hundred other instances of her charity belong to that epoch. The memory of them is preserved, amongst the worthy descendants of those people and often recurs in their conversation, with touching gratitude and emotion.

Madame Gamelin continued that noble undertaking in the little house on St. Philippe St. for four years. Her family of poor was ever increasing; her quarters were fast becoming too small for them, and yet the rent absorbed great part of her slender resources. Full of confidence in Divine Providence, she prayed herself, and caused her old people to pray that some charitable per-

son might be inspired to give her a house, which should be better proportioned to the needs of the work.

Her faith and confidence were too great not to be heard, and it was doubtless God, who inspired her with the happy thought of having recourse to Mr. Olivier Berthelet, whose name has been rendered immortal by his munificence to the communities of the city and notably that of the Providence of which he was one of the most signal benefactors.

Madame Gamelin, then invited Mr. Berthelet to visit her old people. He willingly acceded to her request, and one of those aged ones, implored his help in simple and touching language, which went straight to his heart. Without delay, he made a donation to Madame Gamelin of a larger house, situated on St. Catherine St. quite near the Bishop's palace. ( 1 )

Considering things from a merely human point of view, it might have been a matter of astonishment that Madame Gamelin, should have thought of enlarging her house and increasing the number of her poor, at the very time when her resources were so meagre. But her faith in Providence became the greater as human means seemed to fail. She was fully convinced that God would send her help at the propitious moment.

The venerable Bishop Bourget recalled these facts, in a discourse to the Ladies of Charity, on the 18th February, 1867. " The heart of that admirable woman "

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( 1 ) Before the great fire the Bishop's palace and the Cathedral were at the corner of St. Denis and St. Catherine Sts.





M. OLIVIER BERTHELET,  
a signal benefactor of our Institute





he said, " was so large that her hands could not contain the alms that flowed through them like myrrh into the bosom of the poor. She had also, a singular talent, for associating with herself, other generous hearts, like her own, and by that excellent means, though with small personal resources, she was enabled to undertake and accomplish such great things.

" In that way she formed an association of charitable women, each of whom agreed, to pay a small monthly board for one poor woman.

" By this means the number of these good, old people insensibly grew, until the house was insufficient to contain them. It was then that she made appeal to the generous heart of a wealthy citizen, who willingly procured for her, a larger residence. This, which had once been a house of ill repute, became now an asylum of charity and the cradle of a new community.

" Furthermore, she used to the greatest advantage, for the benefit of the poor, such means as were placed at her disposal. So that people gladly acknowledged that it was a pleasure to give to Madame Gamelin, since she turned every gift to the best account. "

About that time, Madame Gamelin secured the valuable services of Mademoiselle Madeleine Durand who had already given so many proofs of her devoted interest in the Asylum. Melle Durand never left her again, and became, later on, one of her first companions in religion.

## CHAPTER V

1835—1838

THE "YELLOW HOUSE." — THE SEMINARY CONFIDES TO MADAME GAMELIN THE DISTRIBUTION OF A PORTION OF ITS ALMS. — POLITICAL TROUBLES OF 1837—1838. — VISITS TO THE PRISON. — SERIOUS ILLNESS OF MADAME GAMELIN. — DEATH OF MGR. LARTIGUE.

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The "Yellow house", so called in the annals of the Community because of its color, stood on the corner of Sts. Catherine and Hubert Sts. It was a modest, frame building, two stories in height, sixty feet long by forty wide. It was situated quite near St. James' Cathedral and the episcopal palace, and thanks to that near neighborhood, the work for aged and infirm women was enabled to receive the assiduous attention of the Bishop, and in that way a new and beneficent impetus, to which was owing the fact, that it presently became the cradle of our Institute.

Madame Gamelin delayed no longer in drawing up a rule for her little Community, fixing the hours for work, for meals, for spiritual reading and other exercises of piety. To increase her resources, she set her old women to various kinds of works, adapted to their strength and skill. Some could spin, others sewed, or cut up strips of various stuffs, for the making of rag carpet, others made up canvas bags, or other objects of the same nature.

The result of these labors, was no very considerable sum, and it again became necessary to seek for outside help. Madame Gamelin caused the old women to collect the remnants of food from the city hotels. She invited her friends to visit her house, and strangers came also out of sympathy for the work, and these visits were usually the occasion of almsgiving.

The Seminary also came to her aid. Through the intervention of Father Saint Pierre, whose sympathy and devotion to Madame Gamelin and her Asylum, had always remained active, she obtained the distribution of the alms given by the Seminary to that district, with the privilege of retaining a certain portion for her house. Thus her work developed, little by little, verifying by the slowness of its progress, that saying of Père Lacordaire, "Even supposing the grain to be good in its nature, it requires delay for its germination, and a whole winter's sleep under the earth."

Always ready, moreover, to relieve new sufferings or alleviate new misfortunes, Madame Gamelin did not limit her zeal and devotedness to her own Asylum and her immediate neighborhood. The insurrection of 1837 gave her an opportunity of proving this contention.

The Montreal jail, was fairly overflowing with political prisoners, from the town and country, many of whom belonged to prominent families. Some of them had a wife and children, with whom they were strictly forbidden to communicate. This was a cause of cruel suffering to all of them, and considerably aggravated the anguish and uncertainty of their situation.

Touched by these misfortunes, Madame Gamelin exerted herself to bring them help. To the motive of compassion, was added the desire of doing good to their souls, by reanimating their sentiments of faith and christian piety. (1)

She asked, and, thanks to the esteem in which she was held, and the influence she enjoyed, she was able to obtain a general permission to visit the prisoners as often as she desired, and to bring them such help, as she deemed advisable. She availed herself to the full of this authorization and was to be seen every day, proceeding thither, with a basket full of provisions on her arm. Accompanied by one of her ladies, who was very often Madame Gauvin, she crossed the threshold of that gloomy building, being always saluted in the corridors the by English sentries, who presented arms.

The news of this favor that had been granted to Madame Gamelin, very quickly spread through the country, and she began to receive innumerable visits and letters, from the relatives and friends of the prisoners, who confided to her messages and gifts for the incarcerated. She gladly undertook these commissions adding thus a new service and an additional sweetness to her ministry of consolation and edification, and winning all hearts by that affectionate kindness, which paved the way for the conversion of many souls. She became known throughout the city, as "the Angel of the Pris-

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(1) The daughters of Mother Gamelin, still continue this work of visiting the prisons. The Sisters even accompany the condemned to the scaffold.

oners." An anecdote, in connection with this charitable ministry, may be related here especially as it belongs at the same time, to the childhood of one of our Community, Sister Jean-Baptiste, who was then a child of ten years old. Her father, Jacques Longtin, a farmer of St. Constant, was amongst the number of those imprisoned.

On the 8th November, 1838, the child came to Montreal with her mother, who was trying very hard to gain access to the prisoner. Permission was refused and her grief was the greater, that martial law had been proclaimed upon the previous evening, and sinister rumors were in circulation, concerning the fate reserved for those unfortunate men. In her affliction, the poor woman went for counsel and help to Madame Gamelin.

"The latter", writes Sister Jean-Baptiste, "being unable to bring my mother to the prison, because of her having been already refused, had the delicate kindness to let me accompany her on her daily visit. I set out then with Madame Gamelin, helping her to carry the provisions, a portion of which were destined for my poor father. My heart swelled almost to bursting and burning tears rolled down my cheeks, as I thought of seeing my beloved father, a prisoner in that fearful dungeon, he who had always been so good and whom we loved so much.

"We crossed the courtyard of the jail, between two ranks of armed soldiers. The gaoler opened an immense iron door and closed it again behind us. I was trembling in every limb, but Madame Gamelin reassured me with her motherly kindness.



“ We presently reached the prisoners’ ward, and on seeing her, they all hastened towards her, as to a mother. She greeted them lovingly : “ I have come ” she said, “ to see how my children are to-day.”

“ Whilst she distributed her messages from their families, and the provisions amongst which were tobacco and various delicacies, I was enabled to see my good father. I do not know what I said to him, since I was fairly choking with sobs, but that interview has remained indelibly impressed upon my mind.”(1)

During that long visit, Madame Gamelin, according to her wont, gave her dear prisoners, a short, pious reading ; she recited the Beads with them and when she was on the point of leaving, she said smiling : “ If you are willing, we might as well say our night prayers together, before I go away.” And all those worthy fellows knelt upon the pavement and mingled their voices for the last time, in prayer, with that of their consoling angel. (2)

How many other touching scenes were enacted within these walls during those disastrous days ! How many tears flowed, how many hearts were rent when those condemned to death, received a last visit from their families, exchanged with them a last embrace

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(1) Mr. Jacques Longtin was condemned to death, but was afterwards exiled instead, to a penal settlement in Australia.

(2) 112 patriots were tried before a court-martial, in November 1837, and in April 1838, 98 were condemned to death ; of these 12 were executed, 12 acquitted, 30 released on parole and 58 transported.

and uttered a last farewell to those, who already stood within the shadow of the scaffold ! How beneficent the part that could be played amid those great sorrows, by the compassion of a strong, yet delicate charity, proceeding from a loving heart and a believing soul, like those of Madame Gamelin !

The memory of her devotion has been enshrined in our history. It is fully recognized in various works that have been published since that epoch. " There are two names, in particular, deserving of special mention, " writes Mr. L. O. David, ( 1 ) " and which the prisoners of 1838 have never forgotten : Madame Gamelin, who later became the Foundress of the Providence and Madame Gauvin, mother of Dr. Gauvin, who himself took part in the events of 1837. "

" Mesdames Gamelin and Gauvin, " says, Mr. F. X. Prieur, " gave proofs of a christian charity and devotedness, which neither cold nor fatigue, contradictions nor embarrassments could lessen. I would like to be able to thank them adequately, not only in my own name, but in that of my companions ; but, words are powerless in such a case ; God has reserved to Himself, the power of rewarding such actions. " ( 2 )

To these testimonies, may be added that of another participator in those sad events, who was actively

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( 1 ) The Patriots of 1837—38.

( 2 ) Notes of a Condemned Political Prisoner.

concerned in the political struggles of that period, and who some years later, wrote to a friend the following letter, which we have here reproduced almost in its entirety.

### **A Distinguished Woman.**

We have received from Mr. Jean Girouard, ex-M. P. P. a very valuable letter which we are extremely glad to reproduce here. It describes a visit paid by that remarkable man, to the establishment of Madame Gamelin, the "Angel of the political prisoners of 1837—1838," and the Foundress of the Providence. A thousand thanks, to Mr. Girouard. "

" I had long been wanting to go and see Madame Gamelin. I felt that it was a duty of gratitude ; for I have often told you of the trouble taken by that good lady, in assisting the poor prisoners, and that at a time, when a relentless power, made humanity and benevolence, so to say, a crime. In those unhappy times, women alone rose above circumstances, and displayed a power, which a stern despotism would fain have crushed.

"The admirable woman whom I have just mentioned, found, not alone, in the dungeons of a political inquisition, unhappy fellow countrymen to assist and console, but the bowels of her christian charity caused her to discover, many other and no less worthy objects of her solicitude. Throw aside then Legouv  , and those other pompous and elegant eulogies of the same nature, and come with me, to Madame Gamelin's where you may see charity in action.

" I saw there christian charity ; the unfortunate under its protection, from their very entrance into the world ; I saw poor, little innocents, the children of weakness, of crime, of extreme misery, received at their birth by the hands of religion and saved from a premature death. It only remained, for me, to behold the same succor, bestowed upon humanity at the end of its course. For here, care is bestowed, not only upon innocent, little creatures, who repay it by the sweet smile of childhood, but also

upon human nature in its decrepitude, in its most deplorable conditions, under its most repulsive form.

“ Good God, why do we not die, in the full flush of health and strength ? Why must we wait to be cruelly abandoned by those faculties, which bring us into communication with our surroundings, and especially with our fellow beings ? Wherefore, should we linger, until we are assailed by the pains and infirmities that belong to the wearing out of the bodily machine, and when naught remains for us, but a species of vegetable existence and the sensation of suffering?

“ Well, it is when a climax is put to all these evils, by the misery and deprivation that are added to these other misfortunes, that the virtue of a woman should come to their aid. Without wealth or power, or other visible means, she has succeeded in putting her design into execution. A little later, she will erect with the help of some charitable ladies of Montreal, and on land that she has purchased near the Bishopric, an hospital well adapted for her purpose. For at the present time, Madame Gamelin finds herself, very much crowded, into exceedingly small quarters. However, just go in, and you will be astonished at the cleanliness and order that reign there.

“ About thirty old women, who would otherwise have died from misery or want of care, have there found a refuge against poverty, a haven of peace and consolation, where they continually receive all the attention required by senility, especially when blindness, deafness, paralysis, and the other infirmities of old age are superadded. They are nearly all sexagenarians, or octogenarians ; though there are, even, a few centenarians amongst them.

“ Such of these old women as are not altogether helpless, are employed in various kinds of work. Some spin, others snip pieces of stuff, with the only fingers that remain to them ; others cut and roll this into balls, for the manufacture of rag carpet ; these knit, while others make bags, or such other works as are suited to their capacity. Those who cannot work, pray ; I saw three of them making their adoration in the chapel where a priest comes every day to say Mass. For the rest they are all well dressed, and almost entirely with stuffs made in the house.

“ Madame Gamelin is alone at the head of this house with no other help than that afforded by a good woman, who has also consecrated herself to the care of poor and infirm old age. They get no help from their guests, except in the case of one blind girl, who can sweep and dust.

“ I confess that I left the Asylum with a feeling of profound admiration, both for Madame Gamelin, and for that source, whence she has drawn the idea and the strength of soul necessary to accomplish so excellent a work. How beautiful, then, is that religion which inspires such sublime and touching devotedness; which leaving aside all the enjoyments of the world, all the sweetness and the comfort of life, consecrates itself exclusively to the relief of misery !

“ And such misery, Good God, that of extreme decrepitude! Scarcely could there be found in relative or friend, a love and courage strong enough to overcome all repugnances and to bestow such care. . . . Yes, it is in these institutions of pure charity, the Catholic religion must be studied, that it may be known, understood, admired and cherished. Faith is love ! Henceforth I will not waste time, in idle argument with certain strong-minded persons, whom I occasionally meet. I will send them there, where I have found all that is necessary to revive in my soul, those consoling convictions and those sentiments which make the happiness of man.

J. Girouard.

November 6th, 1841.

The incessant labor imposed upon Madame Gamelin for the support of her Asylum, soon exhausted her physical strength, and in the course of the year 1838, she fell dangerously ill. The doctor recognized her very first symptoms, as those of typhoid fever, and the patient was soon reduced to extremity. Innumerable were the prayers that rose to heaven for her recovery, and abun-



dant the tears that flowed, from the fear of losing so loving and devoted a mother. Desolate widows, inconsolable poor persons, succeeded each other continually before the altar of the Asylum oratory, where they felt as if their prayers and lamentations, to the God of the afflicted, must be more favorably heard. On the 14th September, she fell into a swoon, which was believed to be her agony. Her confessor, Father Saint Pierre, recited the prayers for the dying. Her most intimate friends, and a few of her poor knelt at the foot of the bed, expecting every instant that she would breathe her last. It was during that supposed agony, that the Blessed Virgin appeared to her and showed her the place reserved for her in heaven.

“ But my crown, ” as she wrote later, “ had hardly any diamonds in it, and my good Mother sent me away, telling me that I must correct my impatience. I saw my children, who seemed as if wishing to draw me toward them. I also saw my husband amongst the number of the blessed.(1) ” Coming out of that swoon, and regarding those around her, with a smiling and kindly expression, she said : “ Do not weep any more, I am not going to die, now. ” And in truth from that moment, her strength gradually returned ; she was soon quite recovered, and in a condition to resume her works of charity.

The beginning of the year 1840, was signalized by a painful event : this was the death of Mgr. Lartigue,

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( 1 ) We have autographic testimony of that vision, related by Madame Gamelin herself, in her Journal of Retreat for 1848.



who fell asleep in the Lord, at the Hotel-Dieu, on the 19th April, Easter Sunday, in the arms of his coadjutor, Mgr. Bourget, and Father Quiblier, Superior of the Seminary.

Madame Gamelin, long mourned for that holy prelate, her own personal friend and that of her house, the devoted protector of her infant work, in which he had never ceased to take the liveliest interest. "Whilst he was at the Seminary, he was often seen traversing the city streets, carrying food to the poor or clothing with which he was going to cover the suffering members of Jesus Christ. He secretly sold every object of which he could dispose, to satisfy his inclination for doing good. (1)"

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## CHAPTER VI

### 1838—1843

MANY BISHOPS VISIT MADAME GAMELIN'S ASYLUM. — THE FIRST MASS IS SAID IN THE ORATORY—TOKENS OF SYMPATHY, FROM THE COMMUNITIES OF THE CITY. — INCORPORATION OF THE ASYLUM. — BISHOP BOURGET AND THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY.

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AT the time of Mgr. Lartigue's death, Madame Gamelin's Asylum had already earned public sympathy and admiration. The most prominent citizens

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(1) Religious Miscellany, April 30th, 1841.



Mgr. JEAN JACQUES LARTIQUE,  
first Bishop of Montreal



had honored it by their presence. Mgr. Forbin Janson, Bishop of Nancy, had visited and blessed that humble abode, assuring its pious foundress, that her work begun in poverty and destitution, should always continue. Some months later, Madame Gamelin had the consolation of receiving there, three other bishops, who were brought thither by Bishop Bourget. These, were Bishop Fenwick of Boston, Mgr. Turgeon, coadjutor of Quebec, and Mgr. Gaulin of Kingston. The benevolent interest shown by the episcopate, in that nascent work, was a great encouragement, of which its foundress preserved the most grateful remembrance.

Another signal happiness was vouchsafed her that year, in the permission granted for the celebration of holy Mass, every day, at the Asylum, and for the retaining of the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle, during the time of novenas, the Month of Mary, or other solemn occasions. This favor was asked of Mgr. Bourget by two infirm old women, who kneeling at the Bishop's feet represented to him, that many of them through their age and infirmities were deprived of hearing Mass, even on Sunday. The Bishop was only too happy to grant their request, and to arrange that a priest from the palace should go there every morning to say Mass. Madame Gamelin immediately set to work, to provide all that was necessary for divine worship, and since the little Asylum was unable to bear the expense, she had recourse to the various communities of the city, asking their assistance. She everywhere met with a willing response. The religious of the Hotel Dieu, of the

Congregation of Notre Dame, and of the General Hospital, gave her the ornaments and linen necessary for the Holy Sacrifice. Mass was celebrated for the first time on the 13th December, 1841, on a little wooden altar, offered by the Sisters of the General Hospital, (Gray Nuns), which is still to be seen in the old women's hall in the Providence Asylum. Father Prince was appointed chaplain of the house, Father Saint Pierre retaining the office of confessor.

Madame Gamelin testified her gratitude to heaven, by organizing a guard of honor, for the day and night, each time that she had the happiness of keeping the Divine Master under her roof. Happy destiny for that poor dwelling, which after having been a place of disorder and sin, became an asylum of prayer, charity and recollection, the tabernacle of the thrice holy God.

That favor was a powerful stimulus to the pious widow, in her charitable labors and undertakings. She never went out of the house, without going to kiss the floor of that little oratory, where Mass had been celebrated in the morning. Heaven deigned to reward her ardent faith, and the extraordinary favor which she had received in the church of Notre Dame, was repeated in the "yellow house."

One day, as she was about setting out for the market, without a penny in her pocket, she went to prostrate herself, according to custom, at the foot of the tabernacle. Tapping lightly on the railing of the sanctuary, she said to our Lord: "My God, I am

going to do the marketing for your poor, and my purse is empty. " She had scarcely left the house, when an unknown person came up to her and said : " I learn that you have nothing in your purse ; there is something to help you. " And giving her twenty-five shillings, the stranger withdrew without telling her name.

An event which was of importance for the diocese, had also a happy effect on the work of Madame Gamelin. This was the creation of the Cathedral Chapter, erected on the 21st, January, 1841. Our Community, from the beginning, had the closest ties with this Chapter, since its Chaplains were for a long time, chosen from that body, and its ecclesiastical Superiors even to the present day, are taken from its ranks. These clergymen have showed us an invariable kindness, for which we cannot be sufficiently grateful, and therefore, we have always regarded them as our fathers and signal benefactors.

The Asylum also obtained invaluable help from the devotedness of the Ladies of Charity. Many of them adopted an old woman, for whom they paid twelve or fifteen shillings a month.

Full of gratitude for these favors, Madame Gamelin felt impelled to bind herself, in a still more intimate fashion to that work, to which she had already given her whole heart and the greater part of her time. On the 2nd February, 1842, with the consent of her director, she privately pronounced the following vow, which bound her forever to the work she had established.



" I promise joyfully, and with all my heart, to live for the rest of my life in perfect continence, to be the servant of the poor, in the measure of my strength, to exercise a stricter supervision over my conversations, and to cut off from my clothing whatever may savor of luxury, or ornament. I wish to give myself to God that He may do with me what He will ; I submit thereto, with entire resignation. Help me, O my Mother, to keep the promises which I have this day made to you." (1)

EMMÉLIE GAMELIN.

2nd February, 1842.

This was an unconscious step towards the solemn and decisive engagements of religious life, towards which Divine grace was gradually leading her. She had already given it serious thought. Her director, Canon Prince, did not favor this inclination, whether, he was not fully convinced of her vocation, or wished to test the solidity of her dispositions, before encouraging her to follow that path. A saying is recorded, of one of his colleagues of the Cathedral Chapter, Canon Blanchet, with regard to this subject. He said, one day, joking, to the future Foundress of the Providence : " You become a nun ? Why you are no more cut out for it, than I am to be a Bishop. "

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( 1 ) An autograph copy of this vow, is preserved in the Archives of the Bishop's palace, in Montreal.

He certainly did not display the gift of prophecy in this instance, since some years later, he was nominated for the new episcopal See of Walla Walla, whither he was later to bring for the service of the poor and sick of his diocese, the daughters of the Institute, of which Madame Gamelin had become first Superior.

In the Spring of 1841, Bishop Bourget, made his first journey *ad limina*. During his absence, Madame Gamelin's Asylum obtained civil incorporation from the legislature. The measure which passed, on the 18th September, 1841, had been introduced by the Hon. D. B. Viger and Hon. J. Quesnel. Mr. Alfred Larocque took an active part in assuring the success of this venture and arranging the preliminary steps. The new Association bore the name of "Corporation for Aged and Infirm Women of Montreal."

It was composed of the twelve, following ladies, with Madame Gamelin, as directress; Mademoiselle Madeleine Durand, as sub-directress; Madame François Tavernier née Cadieux, as Secretary; Madame Maurice Nolan, as Treasurer; Madame Paul Joseph Lacroix, née Lacroix; Madame Augustine Cuvillier, née Perrault; Madame Alexander Maurice Delisle, née Cuvillier; Madame Edouard Benjamin Fabre, née Perrault; Madame Denis Benjamin Viger, née Fortier; Madame Julien Perrault, née Lamontagne; Madame Simon Delorme, née Dufresne, and Mlle Therese Berthelet.

One of the principal clauses of this bill, provided that, "these ladies and all other persons chosen by them, to assist or succeed them, should form a body politic, having full power to acquire, possess, sell, in a word, to hold in any legal manner whatsoever, for themselves or their successors, all sorts of goods, moveable or immoveable, with the object of creating, supporting, enlarging and perpetuating an Asylum, for aged and infirm women.,,

Hitherto these ladies had contented themselves with helping Madame Gamelin in her work, without forming themselves into a regular association. Though all the time, they had visited the poor and sick at their homes and brought them such assistance as they could obtain for them.

Soon after his return from Europe, on the 16th October, Mgr. Bourget assembled the ladies of the new Association in the little oratory of the Asylum, to bless and encourage their labors. After the singing of some hymns, the holy Bishop, addressed that little gathering, in one of those discourses full of warmth and of unction, of which he found the secret in his heart, overflowing with charity.

Recalling the beautiful words of St. Lawrence, a Roman proconsul, he showed them the veritable treasures of the Church, in the poor, the infirm, and the sick of whom She has constituted herself the guardian; in the suffering members of Jesus Christ, whose wounds she heals, and whose misery she relieves.

St. Vincent de Paul, no doubt, spoke in that same strain to the ladies of Paris, whom he associated with his works of charity, and as they, after the inspiring words of " Mr. Vincent ", so the ladies of Montreal, touched by the eloquence of their holy Bishop, felt themselves animated to pursue their generous enterprise, with courage and ardor.

Bishop Bourget, furthermore, on that occasion, opened up a new horizon to their hopes, regarding the future of the humble Asylum, which they had taken under their patronage. In the regular meeting over which he presided after the religious ceremony in the oratory, he acquainted them with his design of bringing to his episcopal city, to take charge of the Asylum, the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, whose Superior had agreed to his demand, during his recent visit to Paris.

This news was joyfully received by the ladies, since it rendered the future of their work secure. Madame Gamelin shared in the joy of her companions. A soul less disinterested than hers, might have felt some discontent or at least sadness, at the thought of seeing that work which she had hitherto directed with so much wisdom and devotedness pass into other hands. But as she had never sought in that work anything else than the good of the poor and the will of God, she was ready to approve and accept the decision of her Bishop, wherein she saw at once the divine will and a pledge of stability for the future of the work.

The Association publicly known, under the beautiful name of Ladies of Providence, decided at a meeting held, on the suggestion of Mrs. Nolan, to give to the edifice that was to be confided to the Sisters of Charity the title of Asylum of Providence, and they set to work without delay to raise funds for that foundation.

That meeting was a memorable one, in the history of the work, so that the *Mélanges Religieux*, could truthfully write some days later : " What a small affair might at first sight, have seemed that assemblage of about a dozen persons, escorted by some thirty of the poor and infirm, who prayed together with their pastor. It might have been regarded simply as a devotional exercise. But do not be deceived. There was much more therein than appeared to the eye. It held the future of a great event ; it was the cradle of an admirable work, the outline of a great plan, the foundation of a colossal edifice. All things whatever, that are great and holy in religion, have their origin in prayer and humility. Look at Bethlehem, look at the Cenacle. "(1)

On the day following that meeting the Ladies decided upon the purchase of a piece of land, for the construction of a new Asylum. Thanks to the liberality of Mr. Paul Joseph Lacroix, and of Mlle Louise Lacroix, who advanced the necessary funds, they became in the course of a few days, the owners of a splendid piece of ground, planted with vines and fruit trees, and measuring 56,000 feet, on its surface. Adjoining the grounds of the Bishop's palace, it was just opposite the " yellow house. "

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(1) *Mélanges Religieux*, Oct. 22nd. 1841.



The Ladies paid a constitutional rental on 1200 louis (1) but Mr. and Mlle Lacroix immediately threw off in their favor, half of this interest for a term of six years, with a promise of further reductions in the future.

On the 6th of November following, at the general assembly of the Ladies of the Association, Mgr. Bourget read to them the ensuing decree, which conferred canonical erection upon them :

“Ignace Bourget by the grace of God and the favor of the Apostolic See, Bishop of Montreal, etc.

“If the Asylum known as the House of Providence, but lately, when it was the work of a single person, attracted our attention, and won all our suffrages, how much more should it be the object of our paternal solicitude and affection, when it has become a common and general work. Therefore, our dear ladies and sisters in Jesus Christ, it is a very great consolation for us, to read to you this Pastoral, which should reanimate your courage, while at the same time, giving you the salutary sanction which, doubtless, you most ardently desire.

“Consequently, after having considered before God, the good which may be done in our city of Montreal, and later in all our diocese, by the stability of this christian work, which our faithful sister, Emmelie Gamelin, began long ago, under the eyes of our illustrious predecessor, by these presents we confirm and bless it, and desire that it be a diocesan and regular Institute, with the object of introducing therein, later, the admi-

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(1) About 4,776 dollars.



able service of the Sisters of Charity, daughters of the immortal St. Vincent de Paul.

“ With this thought, we have turned our attention upon the various establishments of charity now existing in Ville Marie, and have seen with much consolation, numerous hospitals opened to the sick and the infirm, to old age, and to forsaken children, but we have been obliged to admit that by their number and objects they do not correspond to all necessities, nor to all classes of evils and misfortunes.

“ We have therefore, especially thought to-day, of founding in your midst a pious and permanent establishment, which should be a safe Asylum for all the victims of infirmity or suffering, of ignorance or poverty, who look to religion for comfort or relief. It is with this end in view, Our Very Dear Sisters, taking as our model, similar associations formed in the charitable city of Marseilles, and knowing your opinions and your good will, so clearly stated at two preceding meetings that we have resolved to form you this day, into a charitable society, and in accordance with your desires, we give the following articles, as the basis of your Institute :

“ 1st : An Association, known as the Asylum of the Ladies of Providence, for aged and infirm women, is established in Ville Marie, under the auspices of the Catholic religion, and in the name of christian charity.

“ 2nd : That Association, is composed of ladies and young girls, of Montreal, who have been aggregated to that work, in virtue of a bill, to that effect, which

passed in the last session of the Provincial Parliament, and also conformably to the Rules of the Association.

“ 3rd : The end of the Association is to receive into a special house, to support, instruct and care for all indigent persons who cannot be received into other institutions.

“ 4th : The Association is placed under our immediate jurisdiction and will be governed by a rule given by us — one of Our Vicars General or a Canon of the Cathedral will assume its direction, and shall be charged to preside over it, in our absence.

“ Priests, according to the number that may gradually become necessary, shall be named by the Superior of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, in Montreal, to serve as Chaplains, to the Association, and to take part in all its deliberations, with the title of sub-director.

“ 5th : An executive council, consisting of women or young girls, elected for that purpose at the general meeting of the Association, shall have the administration, of all affairs connected with the work, and shall see that the Rules governing the Association are put in practice ; that Council, elected for one year, shall consist of one or several treasurers, and eight councilors, all having a deliberative vote, and the directress, a controlling vote.

“ These constituent articles, Our Very Dear Sisters, having been verbally communicated to you, and by you formally accepted, in our preceding meetings, the As-

sociation of the Ladies of Providence, of the Asylum for aged and infirm women, is, from this moment, by us established and constituted ; and we have placed it firstly, under the invocation of our Lady of Pity, whose Feast falls on the Friday in Passion week, and secondly under that of St. Elizabeth, widow, whose Feast is celebrated, on the 19th of November, for its first patron, we have given, St. Vincent de Paul, confessor, whose Feast falls on the 19th of July, and finally as second patroness, St. Genevieve, virgin, whose Feast has been fixed for the 3rd of January.

“ May you then, Our Very Dear Sisters, under these happy auspices, make a complete success of your new and sublime ministry, fulfilling with great glory to religion, all those pious conditions, which should distinguish a woman who is truly christian, and devoted through motives of charity to the relief of the unfortunate. In that hope we bless with all our heart, your efforts for good, and by these presents, grant you our pastoral blessing.

“ Given at Montreal, in our episcopal palace under our signature, the seal of our arms, and the counter-seal of one of our Canons, on this 6th day of November, 1841.

Signed † Ignace Bourget, Bishop of Montreal,

For His Lordship,

J. C. Prince, Sec. Chan.

Two days later, on the 8th November, the Bishop addressed a pastoral letter to the clergy and faithful of his episcopal city, acquainting them with all that had transpired, and soliciting their charitable concurrence, in the foundation of the Asylum, for the benefit of which, the ladies would presently call upon them for contributions.

“ Land has been already purchased, “ he said to them ” and the resolution taken to lay thereon, the foundation of a building sufficiently large, to enable the Daughters of Charity, to fulfil therein their mission. We have therefore requested the twelve ladies, composing the Corporation of the Asylum to pass round a subscription list to all the citizens of this city.

“ In sending them to you, Our Very Dear Brethren, we will borrow once more the words of the Apostle and say to each one of you : “ Help then these ladies, who are so entirely devoted to this beautiful work, and who labor with us, that that charity which is so much recommended in the Gospel may be practiced in its perfection. *Adjuva illas quæ mecum laboraverunt in evangelio.* We hope that you will be prepared, when they go to solicit your help, and that we shall not have to blush for having sent them in vain.”

The ladies, whose number had increased through the powerful incentive of their Bishop, were kept incessantly at work. They divided the city for their pious undertaking, into six sections and went from house to house, imploring the charity of the citizens. Their zeal,

and the trouble that they took, were by no means barren of results. They succeeded in realizing the sum of 1015 Louis.

The following spring, a Charity Sale, which was open for two days on the 16th and 17th of May, in the Hotel Rasco, on St. Paul St, netted 500 Louis. It was the first Bazaar held in our city; the first also, of a long series of annual Charity sales, for the Asylum of Providence and where, for half a century, the friends of our work and of our Community, were accustomed to meet regularly.

The directresses of that Bazaar, were Mesdames Gamelin, Gaurin, St. Jean, Fabre, Levesque, Boyer, Moreau and Lafontaine. For many long years, these names appeared, at the head of all works of charity in Montreal, and well deserved to be perpetuated forever, in her religious history.

The preparations for that Bazaar, required six months of labor and of organization. It was followed, during the year, by two less important sales, held chiefly to dispose of articles, left over from the first. These latter took place in St. James' School, near the Bishopric, where the "*Mélanges Religieux*," was published. (1)

Mgr. Bourget was anxious to do his share of collaboration, in the collection for the Asylum. "The poorest of the poor," said he to Madame Gamelin, "I have not a cent to put into your purse. But that the

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(1) This building which was destroyed by fire has since been replaced by the St. Alexis Orphanage.



poor may not blush for their estate, I too, will become a beggar, that I may have the happiness of sharing in a work so dear to my heart." And in the course of the following Winter, accompanied by a layman he went to every house in the town, extending his hand in favor of the work which he had so highly recommended.

It was on this occasion, that the Hon. Charles Seraphine Rodier, expressed, in a letter to the holy Bishop, those sentiments of gratitude, which he held in common with all his fellow-citizens, "that His Lordship had deigned to make them participators in the prayers and blessings which that house, of benediction, should diffuse in their midst."

The collection made by the charitable prelate, realized 1100 Louis which went to swell the building fund.

The sum already realized, and the hopes that were founded on the Bazaars projected for the following years, permitted the work of construction to be begun without delay. The architect chosen, was Mr. John Ostell and the contractor, Mr. Augustin Laberge.

The superintendence of the work was confided to a Committee, selected by the ladies, which included Messrs. John Ostell, P. J. Lacroix, Augustine Tullock, Olivier Berthelet, and F. Tavernier, all benefactors of the work.

The plan comprised a main building 96 feet in length, by 60, in breadth, flanked by two wings, 90 feet long, by 30, wide, the whole including three stories and offering a frontage of 156 feet.



The blessing of the corner stone took place on the 10th, May, 1842, with extraordinary success. A multitude assembled from all quarters of the city, gathered around the Cathedral, and the ground upon which the new edifice was to rise. A solemn Mass was celebrated in the Cathedral by Bishop Power, who had been recently appointed to the See of Toronto. The Bishops of Montreal, Kingston and Sidyme, (1) were present, together with numerous representatives of the clergy, both from town and country.

After Mass, Father Bilaudèle, Director of the grand Seminary, delivered the sermon of the occasion. He took for his text the words of the inspired Book : " The work of the Lord has begun, He will finish it " and proceeded to show that the Asylum of Providence was the work of God, in itself, in its objects, and in the persons by whom it had been undertaken. Reminding his hearers in a splendid burst of eloquence, that the work of God is always attended by obstacles, he cried :

" But it requires money to erect this monument and where is money to be had? Mothers are required to care for the poor : and those mothers, where are they? Virgins of charity are required, the daughters of St. Vincent de Paul, and those virgins where are they? "... Then praising the devotion of the ladies and the inexhaustible charity of the citizens, he exclaimed : " O Catholic religion, how admirable art thou ! Blessed be

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(1) Bishops Bourget, Gaulin and Turgeon, the latter coadjutor of Quebec.

the Lord, who hast renewed, here in this city of Mary, the marvels of charity and devotedness of the primitive ages of the Church.....Yes, this is the work of God, for a temple is being erected to the God of the poor. It is there, in such institutions, that He is hungry ; it is there, that He is thirsty ; it is there that He is sick ; it is there that He is suffering ; it is there that He is captive ; and it is to those who have assisted the poor that He promises an eternal reward...Bless us, O Lord, with thine own hand, by the hand of Thy Mother, by the hands of thy pontiffs, and in particular by the hand of him who glories in being the poorest person, in his diocese, and who has consecrated the first fruits of his episcopate, to divine charity." (1)

The enthusiasm of the audience was wrought up to the highest pitch. A procession was formed to the place that had been prepared. Flags and banners waved from the triumphal arches and from the scaffolding that had been erected for the spectators. The multitude beheld with emotion, the aged and infirm women of the Asylum marching under the banner of St. Vincent de Paul and followed by Madame Gamelin and the Ladies of Charity.

After the blessing of the corner stone, which was given by Mgr. Power, the invited guests, following the four prelates came, according to custom, to place a trowel full of mortar on the stone, together with their offering.

About the middle of June of the same year, the Rev. John Timon, Superior of the Lazarists of Missouri,

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(1) *Mélanges Religieux*. May 13th, 1842.

arrived in Montreal. He came in the name of his Superior General, who was also that of the Daughters of Charity, to see the building that was in course of construction, and to come to an understanding with the Bishop, as to the steps that had to be taken for hastening the arrival of the Sisters from France. Father Timon declared himself perfectly satisfied with all that had been hitherto done and decided. (1)

He visited Madame Gamelin's house, and addressed his most cordial congratulations to its foundress, and assured her, that in writing, he would inform the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul that they might hope to find in Canada, another Melle Legras, who by her self devotion had caused the true spirit of their blessed Father's humility and charity, to flourish in this country.

The Ladies saw in all this encouragement, a visible manifestation of Divine Providence, which induced them to redouble their charity and zeal in the service of the poor, that they might draw down, a more abundant benediction on their work. They determined to extend their association to the visitation of the poor and sick in their homes.

Mgr. Bourget, who was present, at the meeting, in which this resolution was taken, sent them the very next day, a rule modelled upon that which St. Vincent de Paul had drawn up for a Society of Ladies in Paris, who had consecrated themselves to the work. This

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(1) Rev. John Timon, Superior of the Lazarists of Missouri, in which State, he was born, was afterwards made Bishop of Buffalo, October 17th, 1847, and died April 16th, 1867.

message was accompanied by a beautiful letter, which is here given in its entirety, and wherein all the piety and charity of the holy Bishop's heart seemed to find vent :

To the Ladies of Charity,

At the Providence Asylum, Montreal.

Ladies,

“ Yesterday, I was much consoled and edified by the resolution taken to devote yourselves entirely to the service of the poor, by visiting them in their homes and bringing them whatever help they might require. With a devotedness worthy of your kind hearts, you determined to undertake a work so painful and revolting to human nature, and in that way proved that Montreal has the happiness of possessing generous and compassionate souls, similar to those who by supporting the charitable designs of St. Vincent de Paul,—that man of great works for the relief of suffering humanity,—have sent forth streams of mercy, over the whole earth. By following the example of those heroines of charity, by constituting yourselves the servants of the poor, you give proof of possessing treasures of christian charity, and of having discovered the secret of true happiness for yourselves, that of making others happy.

“ In binding yourselves to the visitation of the poor, I know that you are snatching from your household cares, time which is very precious to yourselves and to your families. I realize that you are thus depriving yourselves of the pleasure, which on many occasions might be yours, of visiting more frequently those who are connected with you by the ties of kindred or of friendship.

“ But the thought that you have left the company of your dear ones, for that of Jesus Christ, will be in itself a great reward, equalling, no doubt the hundred-fold promised in the Gospel, to those who leave all things to follow that good Master. That interior joy, which is the faithful companion of charity, will inundate your souls with a sweet unction, which will soon cause the pleasures of the world to be forgotten. That lively faith which has inspired you to undertake so beautiful a work and by which you are penetrated, in the performance of those sacred duties, you have voluntarily imposed upon yourselves, will enable you to see Jesus suffering in the person of his friends, His confidantes, His brethren, that is to say, in the person of His poor.

“ I send you to-day, the Rule, which I promised you yesterday, and which is based upon that drawn up by St. Vincent de Paul for the various ladies, who desired to be associated with his charitable labors, by performing a work precisely similar to that which you have undertaken. I cannot propose to myself a more beautiful model, nor draw from a better source. In



making a few changes and additions, it is only to accommodate myself, to our actual needs and conditions. Therefore, Ladies, it is not from my hand that you receive this rule, but from that of the great Saint, who was evidently raised up by Providence, to preside not only over all the works of charity of his own time, but also those which shall be accomplished, in the course of centuries and in all the countries of the world.

“ In giving you this Rule, I believe that I am imparting to you, the spirit and the heart of that admirable Saint. It will be easy for you to draw thence those lights, which imprinted upon all his works the character of the divine, that is to say, the discretion and prudence which can only come from above, and the universal charity which made him compassionate all human miseries.

“ Guided by that wise direction and supported by that powerful protection, you may hope that Our Lord, himself will preside, over the distribution of your alms, that He will bless your generous efforts, and multiply the funds which you have collected for His suffering members. Believe me, you have taken, Ladies, the surest and most efficacious means of ensuring the successful establishment of the Daughters of Charity, in our city, by yourselves, undertaking to anticipate their work.

“ Your willing service of the poor, will be as so many eloquent voices, announcing their arrival in the city. Your charitable labors, will open all hearts and



purses to you, so that you may soon be in a position to erect, as rapidly as possible, the magnificent monument which you desire to consecrate to the glory of religion and to the honor of that august Mother, who is the patroness of our city.

“ In taking upon yourselves this beautiful mission, you will shed a new lustre upon our holy religion, which alone is capable of inspiring such devotion ; you will lighten considerably the burden of your pastors, who will find in you zealous and diligent almoners ; you will facilitate for the rich, the accomplishment of that duty, which is so strictly imposed upon all those whom Our Lord has blessed with worldly goods ; you will greatly contribute to the glory of our city, upon which you will draw down, the most abundant blessings of heaven, and finally, you will be the joy and consolation of your Bishop, who will find in your charitable labors, a powerful motive to hope for his own salvation and that of his flock.

“ In blessing your glorious undertaking, I am from my heart,

“ Ladies,

“ Your very humble and obedient Servant,

“ † Ignace, Bishop of Montreal. ”

These words were full of encouragement to those hearts already so well disposed. The work of visiting the poor, was speedily and intelligently organized. The

society was divided into six groups, corresponding to the six districts of the city and suburbs. It had two general depots for money and goods, one at the Asylum and the other in the St. Antoine suburbs. Every day, in both these places, soup was served to fifty or sixty poor people. Messrs. Berthelet and Tullock who took a lively interest in the progress of the work, to encourage the poor and prevent any false shame on their part, often sat down with them, and partook of the soup, which they declared to be excellent.

Madame Gamelin was intrusted with the general direction of the work. Her companions were variously employed in distributing to the poor, relief of divers kinds, and those alms which they collected indiscriminately from all charitable persons. They went to houses and places of business, but especially seized the opportunity of family festivals, or dinners, at which their compassionate voices gave utterance to the complaint and the prayers of the poor, amid outbursts of laughter and gaiety, and in the luxurious surroundings of the fortunate ones of earth.

Many even imposed upon themselves the sacrifice of superfluities in their houses or clothing, to provide for the necessities of widows and orphans. Some were even known to cast their jewelry into the coffers of the poor, after the immortal example of those ladies of the court of Louis XIII, who spontaneously stripped themselves of their jewels, to help the Foundlings, whose miseries were so eloquently set before them by St. Vincent de Paul.

Madame Gamelin herself had, at this period, renounced whatever might savor of worldliness or vanity, in her bearing or attire, such as ornaments for the hair, perfumes, and all those things, to which she had once attached a certain importance.

The new labors and occupations, created by the multiplication of her charitable activity, did not prevent her from bestowing the same affectionate and assiduous care upon her old women, as heretofore. She devoted herself to them the more, since the time, as she believed, was approaching, when she should have to part from those dear charges. She consoled herself, however, with the reflection, that the Sisters of Charity, to whom they were to be confided, would be, for those old people, whom she had so much loved, real mothers, as she herself had been, though in her humility, she had never assumed that title. She continued to serve them at table, to preside over their exercises of devotion and to surround them with the most tender and delicate attentions.

Her generous soul, must have been greatly consoled to see that her zeal and initiative, had caused the fruits of her charity, to be multiplied even in other places. The country parishes and the smaller towns in the vicinity, soon followed the example of Montreal, in organizing in their turn, associations of Ladies of Charity. Such were founded at Longueuil, Terrebonne, Laprairie and St. Hyacinthe. The most prominent women in those localities, such as the Baroness de Longueuil, Madame Masson and Madame Dessaulles, felt honored in

being asked to accept the Presidency : which is a touching instance of the contagion of good example, and of christian emulation.

The very children were inflamed by that ardor of charity. It is pleasant to recall how a future Archbishop of Montreal, young Edouard Charles Fabre, then only twelve years of age, gave all the devoted service of which his age was capable, in the Bazaars wherein his mother took an extremely active part.

And a pretty story is told of how four young girls of Montreal, themselves organized a Bazaar, in favor of the Asylum. Their names deserve to be chronicled here : they were the Misses Alida Bourret, Eleonore Simpson, Virginie Roy, and Marie Louise Leprohon. The eldest of these was only nine years old, and the youngest seven. It was during vacation, and these charming children begged permission from their mothers to employ themselves in working for the poor. Needless to say that the mothers readily consented. They quickly set to work to dress dolls, and at the end of three weeks, begged of the mother of one of them, Madame Bourret, whose husband was the Mayor of Montreal, to place her drawing-room at their disposal, so that they might hold their Bazaar there under her patronage. It only lasted for one evening. Unnecessary to say, that the pretty saleswomen met with the greatest success, and that all their articles were sold. The next day, these kind-hearted children, through Madame Bourret, presented the Bishop, with about ten louis, (1) addressing him

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( 1 ) About 38 dollars.

in the following words, touching in their simplicity :  
“ My Lord, we have had a great Bazaar. We bring you the proceeds which you will please give to the Asylum of Providence, which you caused Madame Gamelin to build for the poor.”

The pretty incident shows the interest, which the zeal of the Bishop and his co-laborers had created in favor of his project and the popularity it had attained. There was then, every reason to regard success as certain, since everything pointed in that direction, when suddenly something occurred, which seemed for a time, to blast all their hopes, and to destroy, forever, the fruit of so many efforts and so much labor.

Nevertheless, it was but one of those providential happenings, which, momentarily put to naught the plans and the efforts of men, only to manifest suddenly some hidden design of God, at an hour which he has not made known in advance, even to those whom He has hitherto employed, unconsciously to themselves, for the furtherance of that plan.

From that adverse happening and from the disappointment, we are about to relate, was really born our humble Community.

If the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul had come to take possession of the Asylum, which had been built for them, the Sisters of Charity of Providence, would probably not be in existence to-day. Now the Spirit of God, which governs and animates His Church had decided to raise up, at that very time, side by



side with the Sisters of Jeanne Mance, the daughters of Marguerite Bourgeoys and of Marguerite Marie Dufrost de Lajemmerais, a new Community of virgins, who were called to provide for new wants, to relieve other sufferings and thus to complete the organization of religious life in our city.

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## CHAPTER VII

1843—1844

A LETTER FROM FATHER TIMON.— FOUNDATION OF A NEW COMMUNITY.— THE FIRST POSTULANTS.— THE SEVEN ROSARIES OF OUR LADY OF COMPASSION.— TAKING POSSESSION OF THE ASYLUM.— BLESSING OF THE CHAPEL.— MADAME GAMELIN'S JOURNEY TO THE UNITED STATES.— HER ENTRANCE INTO RELIGION.

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IN the course of the month of February, 1843, Mgr. Bourget convened the ladies to a special meeting, in which he acquainted them with an unexpected turn of affairs, which was to give an entirely new direction to their work, and to make a vital change in Madame Gamelin's life.

The prelate had just received a letter from Father Timon, Superior of the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul, in the United States, informing him, in the name of the Superior General, that the almost simultaneous foundation of two new houses of the Community, respectively in Algeria and in Rome, would render it im-

possible for want of subjects, to accept the Asylum in Montreal. That was a great blow to the hopes of the ladies and a trial well calculated to discourage them, to lessen their activity and to abate the ardor of their zeal.

It was not, however, sufficient to shake the constancy of the holy Bishop, nor his confidence in Providence, which he felt would never fail him, in an undertaking that had promised so brilliantly, and had had so auspicious a beginning.

It would have been difficult for him, to make overtures to another French Community ; while the choice of such Community, the uncertainty as to its answer, the time that would be occupied by the preliminary correspondence, would all place serious obstacles, in the way, at the very time when enthusiasm for the work ran so high, and whereas the Asylum, the construction of which was rapidly approaching completion, should be able to count, when finished, upon a staff of Hospitallers.

Any delay or uncertainty, would, in fact, constitute a serious menace to the success of the enterprise.

The Bishop, after having prayed and reflected a great deal upon the matter, decided upon a course which, indeed, offered its own risks and inconveniences, but which under the circumstances appeared to him the wisest and safest. He resolved to found a diocesan Order of Sisters of Charity. When he made known his design to the ladies they eagerly acquiesced therein, and

at once set to work, through collections and through their own generosity, to secure, for the new Community whatever might be indispensable for their use.

In the interim, five young girls, had responded to the appeal of their Bishop, and solicited the honor of consecrating themselves to Our Lord, for the service of the poor and the infirm. These were, Melles Marguerite Thibodeau, Agathe Séné, of Montreal, Emmelie Caron, of Rivière du Loup, Victoire Larocque, of Chambly and Delphine Payement, of St. Genevieve. Most of these had comparatively little education, but they belonged to families that were profoundly christian: so that the spirit of faith and the strongly rooted habits of piety formed in childhood, constituted, an excellent preparation for the religious life. Melle Madeleine Durand, who had been attached to the Asylum, since its inception, added her demand to that of the young girls. They were, from that moment, considered as postulants, and clothed in a temporary religious habit, of which the distinctive features were a black cape and a little white cap.

On the evening of 14th March, Mgr. Bourget caused them to begin, under the direction of Father Ginguet, a French priest living at the palace, the exercises of a Novena, in preparation for the taking of the habit, which was fixed for the 25th March, Feast of the Annunciation. The last three days were devoted to a retreat, preached by Canon Prince. Now, on the evening of the first day, before the opening of the Novena, a seventh postulant presented herself in the per-

son of Justine Michon. The Bishop being himself in retreat at the Bishopric, Madame Gamelin took it upon herself to admit the newcomer to the exercises of the Novena, promising to second her request with his Lordship that she might be admitted to the clothing with the others, a favor which Mgr. Bourget very willingly granted. A circumstance which may appear at first sight insignificant but which is sufficiently remarkable when taken in conjunction with an antecedent happening, marked the admission of this seventh postulant. During the course of the Novena, and before the Bishop's authorization for her admission had been obtained, it was found that the first six habits, which had been cut of a piece of stuff, calculated for that number of persons, left just sufficient material to make a seventh. (1) Now one

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(1) Our Mother Foundresses, in conformity with the object of the Institution, were guided in the choice of their costume by an engraving representing a novice of the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul, who was favored by an apparition of the Blessed Virgin. The costume was reproduced in this fashion. A robe of slate gray merino, with a skirt of black woollen stuff, a collar of white linen extending to the middle of the arm, a border of white muslin, two inches and a half wide, pleated into a cotton band and crimped with an iron into broad flat folds that could be fitted, if need be, to a cotton cap. The hood was the same as that worn at present, to it were fastened two pendants of white linen, about four inches wide, which fell at the back under the hood, to a few inches below the collar; the costume was completed by a black belt. For going out, they adopted the same collar as at present. The bonnet was gray, larger than that of to-day, and pleated at the back in the same manner as the hood.

day, in the preceding year, after the celebration of holy Mass, in the Cathedral of Chartres, France, when Mgr. Bourget was praying, with tears, for the establishment of the Daughters of Charity in his episcopal city, an unknown person approached and begged him to accept seven Rosaries of Our Lady of Seven Dolors. Now these seven pairs of Beads were later given by Mgr. Bourget to the seven first professed religious of the Community, and amongst these seven religious, figured Madame Gamelin herself, who took the place during the year, of a postulant who had returned to her family. Did it not seem as if God wished to sanction in that mysterious fashion, the devotion which the new Community had vowed to the sacred sufferings of the Mother of the divine Son.

The first clothing took place in the humble oratory of the yellow house, on the 25th March, 1843. The seven postulants received the habit from the hands of Mgr. Bourget, who, inspired by the mystery of the day, addressed them with the deepest emotion in the following words :

“ As the Archangel Gabriel announced to Mary, the mystery of the Incarnation, so do I announce to you, in the name of the Church, that you are charged with the care of the poor, becoming their real mothers. And as the Angel invited Mary to have no fear, so also do I say to you : Do not fear, little flock ; you shall have crosses, you must expect them, but grace will never be wanting to you. As you have as yet no



Superior, I confide you to the care of the Blessed Virgin. She will, indeed, as I hope, serve as your mistress. In all your troubles, in your grief and anxiety, go to that good Mother, I do not fear to leave you alone, with that blessed Mistress."

He gave them on the following day, a daily rule and announced that Canon Prince, would undertake their spiritual direction, and their religious training. From that moment, indeed, Canon Prince presided over all their exercises, he assigned to each one, her office, and traced out her line of conduct, even in the smallest details. His direction was austere, he spared neither penances nor trials. Apart from his direction, they were to obey, Madame Gamelin, in all things, as their Superior. The latter was, in fact, on the point of identifying herself, more closely than ever, with the work by coming to share the existence of her young companions, as a novice.

The ceremony of the clothing, made a deep impression on her mind. Her aspirations towards the religious life, and the desires, by which for sometime past she had been agitated, derived new force from the example of these young girls, who at the first appeal of their Chief Pastor, had hastened to consecrate themselves to the service of the poor, in the house which she had opened, and which had already received the best part of her heart, and of her life. It seemed to her that a place was marked out for her, in the front rank of those devoted women, who were about to con-

secrete their lives to the practice of religious works. She also recognized therein ; the best means of remaining intimately united to her infirm, old women, while lending valuable assistance to the new Community, by the weight of her experience, and of her influential connections, during that initial period, which must inevitably prove difficult, because of the penury by which it would be attended.

Divine grace was urging her to a decision, in keeping with these views and reflections. But on the other hand, what objections arose within her and how decided was her repugnance to the execution of such a design.

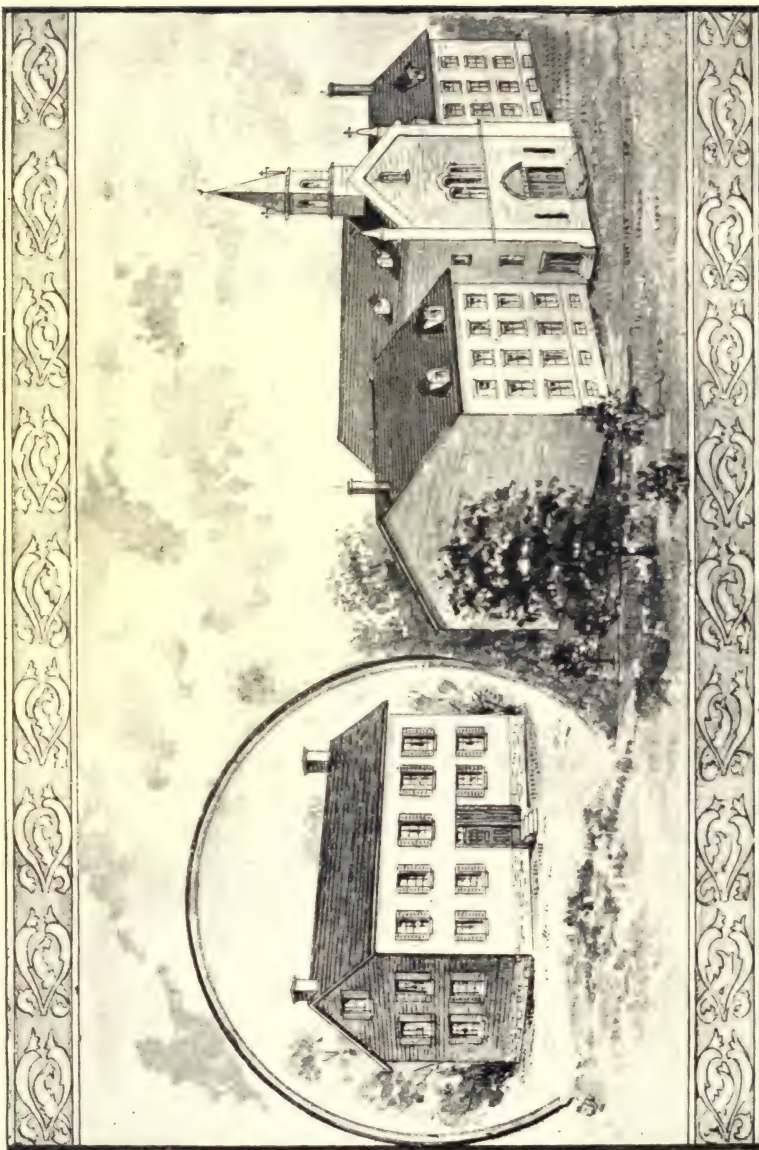
At her age, with the independence of her character, the comparative freedom of her life, and the outside relations which she still kept up, and might hope to keep up more intimately in the future, once a portion, at least, of her duties and responsibilities, had been transferred to other shoulders, to give up everything and enter religion, to submit to the trials of a novitiate, to the perpetual subjection to a Rule, the direction perhaps of Superiors much younger than herself, without any prospect, of escaping thence or of securing for herself at any time, a freer and less onerous existence. There was in all this, a sum total of renunciation and of sacrifice, which even a soul as strong and as generous as hers, could not have embraced, without a vigorous impulse of divine grace and its continual assistance. But God granted her that favor, since he wanted her for himself, in complete, self-immolation.

On the 8th July, one of the novices laid aside the habit, to return home, and Madame Gamelin could hold out no longer. She threw herself at her director's feet, and begged him with tears, to allow her to take the place of the postulant who had left. Canon Prince, received this request, very coldly, advising her to put aside all idea of the religious life, in which he did not yet see the will of God in her regard. She submitted, as always, without reply. The mere mention of the will of God made her tremble. She, however, continued to pray, and very soon afterwards, her last hesitation vanished, and her resolution was taken.

Mgr. Bourget gave her a great deal of help. One day when she made known to him her desires, and at the same time her objections and repugnances, the holy Bishop, obeying one of those inspirations of lively faith, which were so familiar to him, invited her to kneel down with him that they might implore the divine light. For a whole hour, they united their prayers and supplications, at the foot of the Tabernacle, after which they arose, enlightened and convinced, as to what was the will of God. Madame Gamelin was to take the humble habit of servants of the poor, and to consummate her sacrifice by pronouncing the three vows of religion.

Canon Prince put no further obstacle in the way of a determination, so fully matured and tested by so persevering a struggle. He admitted the fervent postulant to take the place of her, whose departure had so afflicted the little family.





VIEW OF THE YELLOW HOUSE.

cradle of our Institute, and of the  
HOUSE OF PROVIDENCE

1893-1898

in 1844



That long hesitation, finally cut short by the voice of authority, gave Mother Gamelin a great feeling of security, as regarded the certainty of her vocation. The year preceding her death, she wrote in her Journal of Retreat, concerning her choice of a state of life : " It was all made for me. O my God, I thank Thee for my vocation to the religious life. Thou didst decide for me by thy ministers. Three of them examined my vocation ; thus I am convinced it was thy will. I have never repented of having followed their advice."

However, before putting her design into execution, and beginning her novitiate, it was decided by Mgr. Bourget and Canon Prince, that in order to be of greater service to the Community, of which she was to form part, and of which she was already indicated as the first Superior, Madame Gamelin should undertake a journey to the United States, with the object of studying some of the houses of Charity there, and notably those of the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul, in New York and Baltimore.

Some months before her departure, she had superintended the installation of the personel of the Asylum in its new quarters, which was then composed of a chapel and two lateral wings. On the 18th May, Bishop Bourget blessed the various wards of which the infirm old women were to take possession, and on the 24th, Feast of Our Lady of Good Help, Madame Gamelin and the novices left the yellow house, which had been the scene of so many acts of charity, devotion and

self abnegation. That was the farewell to the cradle of our Community, the remembrance of which has always remained so dear to us.

The blessing of the chapel and of the altar took place on the 28th August. (1) Mgr. Phelan, Coadjutor of Kingston, officiated at the ceremony, at which were present, Bishop Bourget, Mgr. Signay, Bishop of Quebec, Bishop Gaulin, of Kingston, and Bishop Power, of Toronto. That concourse of prelates was a proof of the favor with which the new Institute was regarded by the Canadian episcopate.

Before the end of the month, the house received from Canon Hudon, the Vicar General, who was then in Europe, a present, which came most opportunely to decorate the chapel of the Asylum, which was then very bare. This was a statue of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours which the good Canon sent to Madame Gamelin. It replaced, in a niche over the arch, the Statue of the Immaculate Conception, which, at first, had stood there and which now appears upon the façade. It was before this image of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours, that our Mother Foundresses, and so many of our Sisters after them made their religious profession.

On the 11th September, Madame Gamelin set out for the United States, in company with Mr. P. J. La-

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(1) The altar was donated by M. Gedeon Leclerc, a wood carver of the city of Montreal.

croix, ( 1 ) and two of her friends, Mesdames, Gauvin and Nolan. On the eve of her departure, Mgr. Bourget addressed to her the two following letters, which are illustrative of the Holy Bishop's piety and prudence.

Bishopric of Montreal,

September 10th, 1843.

Madam,

“ As you are about setting out upon a journey, which has for its sole object the welfare of the Providence Asylum, which the good God gave you the grace, so successfully to found, I feel it a duty, to give you by these presents, a few rules proper for your direction.

“ 1st. In the first place, and especially, you should propose to yourself solely to procure the glory of God, during the course of that long journey, and to seek therein, only the interests of religion and the spiritual and temporal benefit of the poor. You must be particularly on your guard, against the distractions, which beset travellers. For that reason you must avoid any

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( 1 ) Mr. Lacroix was a signal benefactor of our Community, the same who made so considerable a reduction, in the sale price of the land for the Providence Asylum. His son, Mr. Charles Lacroix, emulated his generosity. His first act, on attaining his majority, was to give to the Providence, land for the Hospice St. Joseph, on Mignonne St. valued at £500, (about two thousand five hundred dollars. )

gratification of mere curiosity, keeping constantly before your mind that your journey is not a mere party of pleasure, but a holy and sanctifying pilgrimage, for yourself and for those in whose interest it is made. You should follow the example of St. Anthony, Father of Solitaries, in visiting all that is interesting to charity in the country, to which you are going. So that you may put it into practice, and render more and more perfect that work, which has been already crowned with so many favors, and shall receive yet new ones, every day, if only you do not put obstacles, in the way. Perform, as far as possible, with due regard to the proprieties, your ordinary exercises of piety ; your confessions, Communions, reading, Rosaries, etc. that all may be as regular as if you were at home. Above all, make the practice of the presence of God perpetual. Constantly keep before your eyes, the different journeys of the Holy Family, the circumstances, the objects and the aim of which are well known to you. Let the worthy gentleman, who is to be your protector upon this journey, recall St. Joseph, who advised by the holy angels, led the Holy Family, whither it was needful for them to go, in conformity with the decrees of Divine Providence. Let your venerable travelling companions, be in your eyes as the sacred person of the Blessed Virgin. Bear in mind that your angel guardian, as well as that of the House of Providence, will be with you, and that they themselves, will arrange, with the tutelary angels of those houses, which you shall have to visit, all those affairs, of which it may be necessary for you to

treat. Finally, pray to Our Lord, with much confidence and humility, that He may deign to make known to you His adorable will, and give you grace, to accomplish it in all things.

“ 2nd. To visit with the greatest detail, the establishments of the Sisters of Charity, in all the places, where you may find them. Endeavor, as far as possible, to see them at work, and to work with them. Enter into the smallest details, without, however, violating the rules of discretion. Get information concerning their schools, their poor, their orphans, etc. Be careful to remark the division of their establishments, the dimensions of the wards and other apartments, the number of Sisters in each house. Ask as a favor, for a copy of their Rules, Constitutions and Customs. Try, above all, to obtain the rule of St. Vincent de Paul, to his Sisters of Charity, as a loan, if they will neither sell nor give it to you. Procure such books as are used by these good Sisters, in striving towards the perfection of their holy state. At least, get a list that you may send to procure them elsewhere. Ask them to give you a short history of each of their foundations. Make, or have made, dolls dressed like Sisters, postulants, novices and professed. Write notes of everything of importance, that you observe, so that you may forget nothing of interest in your journey. Visit if you can, some prisons, penitentiaries, hospitals, Houses of Refuge, etc., and if you have an opportunity, make some house to house visitations with the Sisters. It would be advisable to place yourself in union of prayer with these holy women,



agreeing to say each day some prayer, such as an Our Father and Hail Mary, or to hear a Mass occasionally.

“ 3rd. If you should chance to remark in the different Communities which you are going to visit in the United States, customs which are foreign to the usages of our own Communities, you must not be scandalized, because that is due to the exigencies of the places where they are established. I need not recommend you to practice discretion, that your travelling companions may be kept in ignorance of such little miseries as might find place even in the most fervent communities. Abstain as much as possible from speaking of the House of Providence, that you may not offend against the laws of modesty, which forbid us to speak of what we have accomplished for the glory of God.

“ I pray God to send His holy angels to assist you everywhere you go. May that faithful angel conduct and guide you, bestowing his choicest care upon you, as the Angel Raphael did upon the young Tobias. Your little Community, your good old women, and we ourselves, also, shall unite in prayer till your return, that it may please the Lord to take you under His holy protection. We shall always, in union of the holy Names of Jesus and Mary, be with you in whatever place you may be.

I am, Madam, most sincerely,

Your humble, Obedient Servant,

† Ignace, Bishop of Montreal.

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Bishopric of Montreal,

10th, September, 1843.

Madam,

Besides the recommendations, which are common to you and your worthy companions, I feel it my duty, to address the present to yourself. As the good God has willed that you should have become the Foundress of the House of Providence, in Montreal, you have a greater interest than any one else, in promoting its spiritual and temporal welfare, and to that end, must enter into more exact details than your travelling companions, when you visit those various Asylums that christian charity offers to human misery in the United States. You will, therefore, require a special recommendation to Their Lordships, the Bishops and their Vicars General. I am fully convinced that on presenting what is here written to them, you will be assured of their indulgent kindness and the protection which you will require.

I am very sincerely, Madam,

Your Very Humble and Obedient Servant,

† Ignace, Bishop of Montreal.

Madame Gamelin's journey to the United States, was crowned with success. Her reputation had gone before her into that country where her devotion to the

prisoners and her charity to the poor were well known. Some of the Bishops had even visited her little Asylum. Therefore, she met with a most cordial reception. On the 18th September, she wrote from New York to Canon Prince.

“ We arrived here yesterday, very tired after our journey. It is six o'clock and I am at the Hospital of the Sisters of Charity. They received me into their midst with much cordiality. I traversed the streets of New York with two of them, who had the kindness to bring me to their different houses. They have five in that city and its environs. At St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, we found two hundred and fifty orphans, boys and girls, and all poor children. Their House of St. Joseph shelters thirty-six girls. The other houses under their care are proportionately filled. I also visited the establishment of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, which is very handsome. I received Communion in St. Peter's Church, this morning. In Boston, I went to Confession to Mgr. Fenwick, so you see, I thought of my poor soul, although I am so far away.

“ In Boston, I also visited the Houses of Charity and the State's Prison, or Penitentiary, which interested me very much. It distressed me to see those poor prisoners. There are 500, there, at this moment ; they never speak, but work a great deal. There are some Canadians, amongst others, three from Montreal. One of these, I had known before ; he recognized me also, the poor man, but he could not speak to me. It was

in the kitchen, and his eyes followed me about everywhere. How I wished that I could have done something for that poor unfortunate !

“ The Sisters of Charity everywhere, have received me with open arms. They advised me to go to the Mother House, which is situated, about twenty leagues from Baltimore. ( 1 ) It is very far, but I have some hope they may give me there, a copy of the Rules of St. Vincent de Paul. They tell me that I should need to remain there for at least one month to see everything, and especially the manner in which their novitiates are conducted. It would not be altogether possible for me, to remain that long. I think, day and night, of my dear house of Providence. Here in New York, they have granted me the favor of following the Community exercises. I am much edified by the regularity of these holy women.

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( 1 ) Mother Seton, founded, in 1809, a Community of Sisters of Charity at Emmitsburg, in Maryland. Having determined, with the advice of her confessor, to model her community on that of St. Vincent de Paul, she immediately set to work to procure the Rules and Constitutions, of that Congregation, with the hope that some of its subjects would bring to the nascent Community, the assistance of their example and their experience. Mgr. Flaget, who had been named Bishop of Bardstown, on the point of embarking for France, was requested to bring thither that two-fold request: but Providence, did not permit the realization of that pious desire. The imperial government opposed the departure of the religious, and the matter rested there. However, by an exceptional favor, Mgr. Flaget, was able to obtain a copy of the Rules, which he transmitted to their Foundress, Mother Seton, who died on the 14th January, in the 47th year of her age. The elections held on the 25th of the same month, gave as Superior, to the Community, Sister Rose White, who after having

“ I believe that we shall have great thanksgiving to offer to God, for this journey, during which I have already gained much information. I have been careful to take notes every night, of what I have seen during the day. Pray, good Father, and let my dear Sisters and good old women pray, that I may be well received in the Emmitsburg house. I attribute the great success which has so far attended my journey, to the prayers that are being said for me.

“ I do not know when I shall return. Any letters for me, may be addressed to young Bossange ; his address can be had from Mr. Fabre. I shall be glad to get news, for I do not forget the good people of my country, which is the most beautiful after all.

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held office for two consecutive terms was replaced by Sister Augustine Count. Mother Xavier Clarke, governed the Order from 1839 to 1843, and was succeeded, by Mother M. Stephen Hall. Both were constant and devoted friends of Mother Gamelin and of our Community. Since the foundation of the Emmitsburg House, they had made repeated attempts to procure its affiliation with the Daughters of Charity in France, and always unsuccessfully. At length, in 1849, their request was granted, and the 25th March, 1850, the greater number of Mother Seton's Sisters renewed their vows according to the formula of the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul. They passed from that day, under the jurisdiction of the Superior General of Paris. On the 8th Dec. of the following year, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg, were clothed with the habit of the Sisters of Charity in France.

A portion of the Community, however, did not accept the affiliation, with the Community of Paris, and formed a separate branch, establishing their Mother House, in New York, at Mount St. Vincent on the Hudson. These last retained the primitive costume given by Mother Seton.



“Accept, Reverend Father, my most respectful regards, as well as those of Mr. Lacroix and our two ladies. Will you also present the same to our beloved Father and Bishop, Mgr. Bourget? Tell him, if you please, that I read over every day, the holy advice which he gave me on the eve of my departure, striving to put it into practice.”

Madame Gamelin returned to Montreal on the 6th October, 1843, after an absence of twenty days. She brought back to Bishop Bourget, those Rules so ardently desired, of St. Vincent de Paul. Father Deluol, Vicar General of Baltimore, and Superior of the Sisters of Charity, had remitted to her an authentic copy, thanks to the good offices of Mother Xavier Clarke, Superior General of the Institute. It was the very same one that Mgr. Flaget had obtained in 1810, from the Superior General of the Lazarists. The precious document was transcribed for us, by Canon Blanchet, and returned to Father Deluol. Inexpressible was the joy and thankfulness with which these holy Constitutions were received by the novices. They recognized in them the most certain guide for their religious life, and a source of strength for the Community.

Two days after her arrival, on the 8th October, Madame Gamelin finally put off the habiliments of the world, to clothe herself with the poor and humble livery of the Sisters of Charity of Providence. Canon Prince was anxious to perform the ceremony himself, since that privilege belonged to him by more than one

title. He wanted to give a marked solemnity to that taking of the habit. Before the Community Mass, he intoned the *Veni Creator*, to which the responses were made by the novices, and after the Gospel, at the moment of giving the holy habit to the postulant, full of inexpressible joy, he delivered a touching discourse. After a brief commentary on that passage of the epistle of St. Paul to Timothy, where the Apostle enumerates the virtues of the widow, according to God, addressing himself to the newly elected, he recalled in a voice full of emotion, the rewards which God reserves for souls, who give themselves entirely to Him, by religious profession. That evening, there was the singing of the *Te Deum*, and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The sacrifice was consummated. Madame Gamelin had made it bravely and generously, as was to be expected from a soul of her stamp. But no less deep had been the wound made in her heart, by the loosening of those intimate ties, which had always bound her to her relatives and friends, and which the religious life, necessarily obliged her to relax. A letter to her cousin, Madame Fabre, written on the evening of that day, gives us the secret of these more intimate emotions :

“ Do not be offended, my good friend, that I have acted thus, without letting you know. It would have cost me a great deal to say farewell, and I found myself, too cowardly. It, indeed, required courage, to come to this determination. I have so dearly loved my relatives and friends ; but, at least, and with a good heart, I have this morning made all those sacrifices.

“ I hope my dear friend, that you will pray to Our Lord, for me, and help me to thank Him, for having deigned to accept the remnant of a life, of which so much has been given to the world.

“ My sincerest regards to the good mother Perrault, and to Mr. and Madame Levesque, and all the family. As for you, dear friend, accept my warmest thanks for all the kindness which you have ever shown me, and pray for her, who shall be until death,

“ Your sincere friend,  
“ Emmelie Gamelin, Sister of Charity.

Madame Gamelin was passionately attached to her own people. It was painful to her, in the extreme, to give up the full freedom of her relations with them, which had hitherto constituted the joy and the recreation of an active and laborious life. The love of God enabled her to overcome these resistances of the heart, but in making that sacrifice to her Divine Master, her friendships and her affections, were by no means weakened. On the contrary, they gained a new strength, from having the sanction of a more ardent and devoted charity.

“ When you go upwards from the world, into the religious life, “ says an ascetic writer, ” you must love nothing whatsoever, less ; you must not suppress any legitimate affection, only transform them all. You have hitherto loved your kindred, as we love on earth ; you must henceforth love them as they shall be loved in heaven. ”

“ Madame Gamelin, shared these sentiments, which she also put into practice. Always prodigal of her devotion, to kindred and friends in all their needs, she was specially interested in their spiritual welfare, and helped them above all by her prayers and her advice. Traces of that anxiety are to be found in her Journal of Retreats. They always displayed towards her in return the most sincere affection, and after her death, her memory remained in pious and tender veneration amongst them.

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## CHAPTER VIII

1844—1845

THE NOVITIATE. — VISITS TO THE POOR AND SICK. — PROFESSION OF OUR FIRST MOTHERS. — LETTER OF INSTITUTION. — ELECTION OF THE FIRST OFFICERS. — FOUNDATION OF THE WORK FOR ORPHANS AND THAT OF LADY BOARDERS.

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THE novitiate which had been opened on the 25th of March, when seven postulants took the habit, was soon called to receive four others. These were the Misses, Edesse Marchesseau, Ursule Leblanc, Clémence Robert and Emmelie Séné. Having entered at the yellow house, on the 8th of September, 1843, they took the holy habit in the new Asylum, on the 8th December following. On the 23rd of the same month, two others, the Misses, Hermenigilde Choquet and Esther Pariseau also obtained admittance.

By the end of the year, 1843, the novitiate, then contained eleven novices and two postulants. From that time on, the novices began to visit the poor. Every morning, two or three of them often accompanied by a lady of charity, set out, basket on arm, as is still done in our own day, to beg in the various quarters of the town, food and other alms for their poor and infirm. Mother Gamelin, as she was already called, was very often of the party. Her long experience in works of charity, permitted her to direct her companions, in that painful and laborious ministry, which was so new to most of them. With maternal kindness, she initiated them into those various tasks which Divine Providence was presently to impose upon the infant community. Besides her part in the training of the novices, she busied herself with the administration of the Asylum, which already contained, a household of more than fifty persons. She also received all who came to the parlor, and strove to interest charitable souls in the work, but never ceasing the while to follow with the greatest fidelity, the exercises of piety in the Asylum, and those of the novitiate.

Whilst showing the greatest kindness and devotedness towards his spiritual daughters, Canon Prince was both strict and austere in his direction, and did not spare them trials. The older religious still recall with emotion, the numberless penances and humiliations, the constant self-denial and continual renunciation, which this inflexible director expected, especially from his "eldest novice", Sister Gamelin. God alone could keep



account of the sacrifices of her generous soul. Since her widowhood, she had been her own mistress, her means had been such as to permit her to lead a comparatively easy life ; and even when her life was most fully consecrated to works of piety, she had the full control of her liberty. From the moment of her entrance into religion, she found herself subjected to a rigorous rule, which from morning till night curtailed her liberty, and subjected her to demands, which were altogether foreign to her previous habits.

She had to live the common life, without alleviation or exception. She had to become a child again ; to bear with the inequalities of various tastes and characters ; to practice charity and gentleness in the midst of contradictions ; in a word, she had to perform daily acts of self-denial and mortification, the number and the merit of which were known to God alone. Ultimately, and by dint of assiduous effort, that ended only with her life, she retained just enough of her vivacity, to render her zeal more active ; her natural pride, became a grave and unaffected dignity ; her sensibility manifested itself, only in a tender compassion for the unfortunate, and in an affectionate devotion to the Mother of Sorrows, into whose bosom, she loved to pour her tears and the groanings of her heart.

To her, our Community owes the example and the practice of those great devotions which have become its distinctive heritage : Jesus dying on the Cross, the Virgin whose heart was pierced with seven swords, and

St. Vincent de Paul, the great Apostle of charity. Through the force of generous effort and continual watchfulness over herself, she became such a religious as her director required, and which her own ideal of the religious life demanded.

Mgr. Bourget shared with Canon Prince, the difficult and delicate task of training the novices in the spirit and virtues of their state. Besides the spiritual exercises which were given them every day, by their devoted director, the holy Bishop, himself, presided over their spiritual reading and expounded to them the rule of St. Vincent de Paul, which was to be that of their Community. At five o'clock in the morning, he presided over their meditation, so as to initiate them into St. Ignatius' method of prayer. He also gave them frequent spiritual conferences. Fully convinced of the importance of placing the edifice of their perfection on a solid basis, he spared no pains to form them to the essential virtues of their state: the love of God, zeal for His glory, devotion to their neighbor, humility and renunciation. His advice, in familiar or official letters, which we would wish to reproduce, here, in their entirety, are monuments of his devoted zeal, and at the same time, models of that gentle, yet strong direction, by which he knew how most efficaciously to mould souls to the practice of perfection.

Under his beneficent influence, the novices were more and more confirmed in their holy vocation and

sighed for the moment of their religious profession. Mgr. Bourget, himself, took charge of the retreat preparatory to that great day, desiring as it were, himself, to present these mystical Spouses to their heavenly Bridegroom.

The ceremony took place on the 29th March, 1844. That was a memorable date in the annals of our Institute, since it consecrated the memory of an event which secured its stability forever. How many hopes found their realization on that day ! How many doubts were set at rest ! How many fears dispelled ! What supposed follies became wise conceptions ! The anguish and the difficulties of the beginning were forgotten. The action of Providence was shown forth and the designs of His divine goodness and mercy had triumphed.

The Ladies of Charity, had a large share in the joy of that occasion. While the novices were in Retreat they had taken their places in the various offices of the house, or in visits to the outside poor. It was they who decorated the chapel and organized a choir of young girls to take charge of the singing during the ceremony. Several of them even sent their servants to the Convent to prepare meals, and especially the dinner on the day of profession. Thanks to their generosity, it was, indeed, a gala dinner.

During that touching ceremony, sweet were the tears that flowed from many eyes. For the Ladies also it was a day of hope realized, a reward and compensation for the trouble they had taken and the labors

which they had imposed upon themselves. We take from the "*Mélanges Religieux*" of the 22nd April, 1844, the description of that joyful event.

"Last Friday, took place in the chapel of the Providence, the profession of seven of the first Canadian novices, consecrated to the service of the poor and sick, according to the Rule of St. Vincent de Paul. This ceremony, which is new in this country, attracted a considerable concourse of people interested in the work and the pious relatives of those who had given up their own family to adopt the great family of the poor. The little chapel of the establishment had been completely renovated and decorated by the generosity of the Ladies of the corporation, and members of the Association of Charity.

The ceremony began with the invocation of the light of the Holy Ghost. After the chanting of the *Veni Creator* and the celebration of the first part of the Mass, one of the assistants of the officiating prelate, advancing to the front of the sanctuary, extended to the Sisters, by the singing of the anthem, *Prudentes virgines, aptate vestras lampades, ecce sponsus venit exite obviam ei,*" the invitation, which the Lord was making to them, to come and consecrate to Him, their virginity. That little band of virgins, immediately arose and holding lighted tapers in their hand, advanced processionally towards the railing, singing that psalm of the good tidings: "*Lætatus sum, in his quæ dicta s'unt mihi*". Preceded by seven little children who carried upon

platters, the insignia of profession and represented the same number of orphans, the novices advanced singing. They were supported on the right hand by a lady of charity, and on the left by an old woman, chosen from amongst the forty poor of the Asylum.

Thus commingling rich and poor, orphans and the voluntary poor, they took their places before the railing, in presence of the Bishop. A thrill of emotion ran through the entire assembly at that spectacle. Then the Bishop addressed his daughters, asking of them what they were seeking from the Church of God. They answered that they sought Jesus Christ, and that they coveted only the service of the poor. After a second and third demand, which they answered in the same manner, the Bishop accepted the voluntary oblation made aloud by each one, prostrate on the ground. This was not, however, properly speaking, the pronouncement of their vows, for the regular erection of the new community was necessary, before entering upon those solemn engagements. This was accomplished by an official letter from Bishop Bourget, which was read aloud by the Chaplain of the Asylum, and of which this is the tenor :

“ Ignace Bourget, by the mercy of God and the favor of the Apostolic See, Bishop of Montreal, etc.

“ To our dear daughters, Sisters, Emmelie Gamelin, Madeleine Durand, Emmelie Caron, Agathe Séné, Marguerite Thibodeau, Justine Michon, and Victoire Larocque, novices of the House of Providence, of this city, health and benediction in Our Lord.





Mgr. IGNACE BOURGET,  
second Bishop of Montreal



“ It has always been understood, Our Very Dear Sisters, that upon the charity of pastors, devolved the care of widows and orphans, while compassionating all public and private misfortunes. Therefore, this is regarded by pastors, as one of the most binding duties of their charge, which is all charity, to be “an eye to the blind, a foot to the lame, and the father of the poor”, as we are assured by the holy man Job. ( 1 )

“ But as the innumerable duties attendant upon that dread office, do not permit him to enter into all the details, which are demanded by the fulfilment of that sacred and consoling duty, it is necessary therefore, that he should delegate a part of that indispensable labor to charitable and compassionate souls.

“ Which is what we have done, under the auspices of the glorious Mother of God, on the happy feast of her Annunciation, while permitting you, Our Very Dear Sisters, who have decided to consecrate yourselves to God, to band yourselves together for the testing of your vocation.

“ More than a year has been spent in exercising yourselves in the practice of the duties of religious life. The trials and sufferings, of that existence, exceedingly painful to nature, which you have decided to lead, have not been hidden from you. You have had, as we believe, all the trials which Our Lord imposes upon those, whom He wills should consecrate themselves to

His service. You have not permitted yourselves to be intimidated thereby, Our Very Dear Sisters, and the grace for which you have asked, has evidently sustained your courage, in the numberless temptations which must have assailed you. Through the mercy of God, you have been confirmed in that state, wherein you ask us to-day, to establish you irrevocably, and for your whole life. Yes, it is for your whole life that you wish to renounce the world, with all its joys, to become the Spouses of Jesus Christ and the Servants of His poor. Nor have you blindly made this choice, for you have learned by your personal experience, that henceforth you will no longer be in the world, to assist at its festivals or its spectacles, but shall have to listen instead to the lamentations of the unfortunate, to dry the tears of the widow and the orphan ; to feed the hungry, to tend the sick, to receive the last sigh of the dying, to bury the dead, in a word, to perform all the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

“ Such is the sublime vocation to which you feel yourselves called and which by the grace of God, you wish to follow. In the firm confidence that you are doing the will of God, by offering yourselves to His Divine Majesty, to become the Servants of the poor, you ask us to give you the blessings which it is the custom of the Church to pour forth upon virgins, who are the chosen portion of Our Lord Jesus Christ ; and as our office obliges us, to further by every means in our power whatever can contribute to the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbor, we have approved

and do warmly approve of your pious design. Not only do we approve of it, but we wish further more, in fact, to confirm and consecrate it, in the name of Our Lord and of Holy Church.

“ For these reasons, invoking the Name of God, and by the advice of Our Venerable Brothers, the Canons of our Cathedral, we have enacted, decreed and ordained, enacting, decreeing and ordaining, that which follows :

“ 1st. We canonically erect the Asylum of Montreal for aged and infirm women, which has been opened in the House of Providence and already recognized by a statute of the Provincial Parliament, dated September 18th, 1841. We also establish canonically, the Sisters of Charity, Servants of the Poor, to be its administrators, to take care of the said aged and infirm women, and at the same time to visit and care for the sick in their homes, and to perform other works of charity, according, as it may please God to inspire them.

“ 2nd. We permit the before mentioned Sister Novices, and all whom the Lord may call to imitate their state of life, to make for their lifetime, the simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and the service of the poor.

“ 3rd. We give to the new Community, for its good government, firstly, the common Rules of the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the poor and sick, instituted in France, by St. Vincent de Paul ; secondly, the particular constitutions, which we judge may con-



tribute to the greater good of the new Institute ; thirdly, a ceremonial proper to that organization.

“ Such, Our Very Dear Sisters, are those dispositions, which we have thought proper to make in order that your consecration to God may be stable and permanent. May Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made poor, that we might be enriched by His goods, accept as agreeable in His sight, the sacrifice which you are ready to make, of your persons and all that you possess.

“ May He bless that generous design which you have formed, and which to-day, you wish to put into execution at the foot of His altar, that He may give you grace to accomplish it happily, despite the innumerable difficulties which await you. May He give to you all, a mother's heart for the poor and may compassion for the poor be your distinctive characteristic. May your joy be multiplied, in seeing multiplied your family, the great family of the poor. May the Lord provide for their numerous needs, by opening to you the treasures of His Providence. May He send you generous companions who having left the world, with all its pleasures, may find like you their happiness in being the humble servants of the poor.

Finally, may God, the all good and merciful, protect and guard you amid the numberless dangers to which you may be exposed, and may He grant that you hear at the end of your days, those consoling words, of Our Lord Jesus Christ : “ Come ye blessed of my Father, possess ye the kingdom prepared for you, from

the beginning of the world ; for I was hungry and you gave Me to eat ; I was a stranger and you took Me in ; I was naked and you clothed me ; I was in prison and you visited Me.”

Given at Montreal, this twenty-ninth day of March, one thousand eight hundred and forty-four, under our sign and seal and the countersign of one of our Canons, who is, for this work, our Secretary.

† Ignace, Bishop of Montreal,  
For His Lordship, J. C. Prince, Chan.

“ It was after the reading of this important document, continues the “ *Mélanges Religieux* ” and a new interpellation on the part of the Bishop, that the seven novices, who had been examined and called to profession, pronounced their vows in an audible voice and laid their act in the hands of the Bishop, who placed it on the altar. The Bishop, immediately after, blessed the habits of the newly professed, who received them from his hands, kissed them, and retiring with their ladies of honor to an adjoining room, were clothed therein.

“ Meanwhile the Litany of the Saints was sung by the choir. That prayer ended, the professed clad in their new costume, returned and prostrated themselves before the altar, to receive there the blessing prescribed by the pontifical, and the ring and cross which they were to wear. A special feature of this ceremony, was

that the Bishop caused the ring to be placed on the finger of the professed by a poor infirm woman, who was stationed beside each Sister, saying to her at the same time :

“ Remember, my Sister, that to-day, you have become the Servant of the Poor. ”

“ In a similar manner, it was the lady of honor who presented and placed the cross on the breast of the Sister, whose mother and protectress she became, by pledging herself to assist the poor in a spirit of union and charity ; the Bishop confirmed this pious alliance, by prayers and blessings. By a spontaneous impulse of tenderness and generosity, the ladies of honor seized the opportunity to hand a considerable sum to their adopted daughters, and they, in their turn, hastened to pass it on to the poor and infirm, who were placed beside them. Admirable union of wealth and poverty, which in religion go hand in hand, and which are still more divinely united when they advance, side by side, to the Holy Table, to be nourished together with the same Bread of Life.

“ The remainder of the ceremony consisted of an Act of Consecration which was made at the foot of Mary’s altar, upon which might have been remarked a splendid statue of the Blessed Virgin, presented by the young girls who had that day taken the place of the orphans. Finally, after the celebration of the Mass, the *Te Deum* was sung, and the little community retired in procession, singing as they passed through the halls

and corridors, the psalm, "*Ecce quam bonum*, etc, how good it is to dwell in the House of the Lord forever !"

" Behold, then, how far the work of Madame Gamelin had happily progressed, aided and supported by the indefatigable zeal of the Ladies of Charity. Those ladies, have to-day received the reward of their courageous efforts, having been thus favored with a Community, which will henceforth take upon itself the full burden of sacrifice and of self devotion.

" Therefore, since its inception, that work has so fully commended itself to the citizens of Montreal that through their liberality, a superb edifice of one hundred feet by sixty, has arisen as if by enchantment, and already offers an Asylum to more than forty aged, poor and infirm women. In truth, we must congratulate our city, on that admirable and persevering zeal, which has caused it to rank with those cities of Europe, most noted for their almsgiving and their religious establishments. " ( 1 )

On the following day, March 30th, Mgr. Bourget accompanied by Very Reverend Canons Prince and Plamondon, assembled the newly professed. Canon Prince caused them to sign the Act of Acceptance, of the Rules of St. Vincent de Paul. Then the Bishop having read to them the Rule concerning the Superior, and given the necessary dispensations, proceeded to the election of the chief officers, with the following results : Sister

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( 1 ) *Mélanges Religieux*. April 22nd 1844.

Gamelin, Superior ; Sister Vincent de Paul, Assistant ; Sister Thibodeau, Mistress of novices ; Sister Caron, Treasurer. The Community was organized, and the object of the Institute officially defined. In addition to their exterior works, the care of forty-two infirm women had to be divided between our first Mothers, who had to multiply themselves in providing for the needs of the poor. Madame Gamelin never gave herself an instant's rest. Her dear Asylum was lacking in much of the necessary furniture. There were scarcely enough chairs to permit each one to sit down after the fatigue of the day ; and during the day, they never thought of sitting down at all, though the hour of rising was half past four.

Their poverty was very great, their food extremely frugal. It is difficult to understand how our Mothers, in the midst of such privations, could accomplish the amount of work which they imposed upon themselves. The survivors of that period, and it may be said of the succeeding fifteen or twenty years, have left us a touching picture of the painful privations which they had to endure, and which they bore so patiently, and even joyfully. Their food consisted of sheep's head boiled in water. Every day, being a fast day by the Rule, their breakfast consisted of dry bread, watered by a sort of artificial coffee, made of barley, ground and roasted, or crusts of fried bread, collected in the hotels of the city, and taken always without milk or sugar. At supper, they made a diversion in their beverage by means of the leaves of tea, which had been previously



infused in the boarding houses of the vicinity. Butter was a rare luxury, reserved for days of abstinence, to replace the fat of bacon, or other meat, which had been received through charity. If by chance, another offering of charity in the form of a bit of cheese appeared upon the table, the Sisters had to choose between that unusual delicacy, and butter, the use of both together being forbidden. "We were poorer," said one of those generous servants of the poor, "than many of the indigent families whom we visited."

And in spite of all that, they were happy, because they had the consolation of knowing, that they reproduced in themselves the poverty of their Divine Master whose naked and suffering members they had vowed to serve, and the consciousness of accomplishing a work signed with the seal of the cross, by humility, deprivation and charity.

Our venerated Mother drew from her inalterable faith in Providence, the confidence, so sorely needed, in the difficulties and exigencies of an administration, that was constantly becoming more complicated. She had a thousand ingenious ways of allaying anxiety and restoring confidence. One day, the Sister cook came to tell her that there was nothing for dinner. "Do not fear," my daughter, she said calmly, Providence will not fail to send us our dinner. Come with me, and let us sing, to show that we are not at all anxious," and she led the way to the old women's ward; the latter seeing

their Mother approaching, gathered round her as was their wont : " There is a favor I want to obtain immediately from Divine Providence " she said to them " so you must join me in singing our beautiful hymn. " The good, old women, at once, recollecting themselves, mingled their trembling voices, with that of their Mother and her companions, who sang in a loud voice, the following canticle :

O Providence, most gentle,  
Whose bounteous hand bestow,  
Upon us in abundance  
All good things here below.  
Acknowledging the Author  
Of all these gifts divine,  
Ourselves and all that's ours,  
To Him, we should resign.

If riches He outpoureth  
On spring time's early flow'r  
With largesses enriching  
The grass that lasts an hour.  
More fully He bestoweth,  
On Man beloved, His aid,  
That being whom His wisdom  
To His own Image made.

If God who loves us dearly,  
His care doth not disdain  
To sparrows in the tree tops,  
Their little lives sustain.  
The Author of all Nature  
Shall He, then man forget,  
The noblest of the creatures,  
That He hath fashioned yet?

For God He is our Father,  
And bears us in His heart,  
Nor tenderest of mothers  
More sweetness can impart.  
Oh ! Yes, His loving kindness  
Our needs, shall surely see.  
We'll cast our care upon Him,  
Without anxiety.

On leaving the hall Mother Gamelin, repairing to the kitchen found there some remnants of yesterday's meal which seemed scarcely sufficient to provide food for five or six people : " Warm it up, " she said, smiling to the Sister cook, " and you will see that dinner can be served." And in fact, dinner was served to the whole house, the dishes on each table were filled, and some was left over, when the repast was ended. The treasurer of that time, and those who succeeded her, relate that this miracle of Providence, was often repeated, and that provisions which should have been exhausted in one week, lasted for entire months, without apparently diminishing.

Singing was one of the spiritual resources of Mother Gamelin; when she found herself in any financial difficulty, she sang, and caused her Sisters to sing her favorite hymn, " O sweet Providence." If any shade of sadness seemed to hover over the recreations of the Community, she immediately began to sing gaily :

Enjoy, O fervent soul,  
Thy happiness, enjoy

The others caught up the strain with enthusiasm, and the sadness was dispelled. Our saintly Foundress was very fond of music and singing, and for a long time, she herself directed the choir of the house. The Asylum, at that time, possessed no musical instrument ; our Mothers sang in the first gallery of the chapel, often on their knees, or like St. Teresa and her companions, sitting on their heels. Since the Community were few in number, all the Sisters lent their voices. Mgr. Bourget encouraged their pious emulation : " Sing" said he, " sing. Be the cooing doves of the sanctuary. Let your favorite hymn, be the *Stabat Mater*. Your simple canticles, your pious hymns, may convert souls that the finest sermons could not touch."

The month of May, 1844, was one of benediction for the little Community. The Blessed Virgin, showed herself prodigal of her favors. Her daughters therefore, redoubled the homage of their respect and gratitude, in her regard. It was Madame Gamelin's wish that the most beautiful plants from the garden, should adorn the altar, every day. " May the perfume of those flowers," she said, " heal the wounds of her heart, pierced with so many swords of sorrow."

The little family assembled every evening in the humble chapel, singing there the most beautiful hymns. But the most precious offering which they made to her, was the work for the orphans, which was inaugurated on the first day of that month.

The compassionate heart of Mother Gamelin, could not see without pain, the great number of poor orphans who in consequence of the death of their parents, were left without shelter or protection, exposed in their isolation to all sorts of dangers. The limited resources of the Asylum did not seem to permit of undertaking that additional work. But the tireless zeal of the Foundress enabled her to find the necessary means. She convened the Ladies of Charity to a special meeting, and spoke to them with so much warmth and unction, in behalf of those poor children, whose mothers in many instances had died in her arms, that the ladies, of whom Mrs. Nolan was president, decided without hesitation, to set aside one ward of the Asylum for that purpose, and to receive there at once, a dozen orphans, for whom they undertook to pay a board of from ten to fifteen shillings a month.

Not only was the principle of the work accepted, but the work itself was founded, which was a great joy to the heart of our good Mother. Twelve months later, that ward contained fifty orphans.

They received there, elementary instruction and a solid, christian education ; they were trained to house-work and other manual labor, by which they might later, be enabled to earn their livelihood.

It was to obtain additional resources, for this new work, that Mother Gamelin on the 10th September, 1844, founded the work of lady boarders. To this means of revenue was added that of remunerative work.



Various departments were opened, for the manufacture of cassocks, and of church ornaments, tapers and hosts ; together with soap-making and weaving. The days were not long enough for the accomplishment of all this work, a portion of the night had to be given thereto ; and it often happened that after long vigils at the bedside of the sick poor, in an overheated or vitiated atmosphere, the Sisters went cheerfully back to their work, in the morning, without having taken a moment's rest. (1) May we not be permitted to think that it is to those arduous labors of our first mothers, watered by their sweat and so bravely endured that are owing the blessings and the prosperity that have attended our humble Institute.

The 26th of May was a day of holy rejoicing for the Asylum, since it witnessed the blessing of the outer bell. We borrow once more from the "*Mélanges Religieux*," the description of that impressive ceremony.

" On Sunday afternoon, at the Cathedral, took place the solemn blessing of the bell, donated to the Chapel of the Providence, by Mr. Louis de Lagrave, a merchant of this city. His Lordship, himself, officiated at the ceremony, in which took part, Father Quiblier, Superior of St. Sulpice, with some other priests, of his Community. The naves and galleries were filled, by an

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( 1 ) The first ladies admitted were the Misses Louise Lacroix, White, Burroughs Malo, Duluth, Masson, Morand, McCord and Madame Asselin.

immense concourse of the faithful. The sermon of the occasion was preached by Father Porlier, the parish priest of Terrebonne, who while explaining to his large auditory the signification of that ceremony, knew how to excite the generosity of his hearers, in favor of the providential work of our Sisters of Charity.

“ His Honor, J. Viger, a former and first Mayor of Montreal, with Madame D.-B. Viger, did the honors as godfather and godmother to the new bell. Mr. Olivier Berthelet, one of the first benefactors of the House of Providence, and Madame Bourret, wife of the present Mayor, Mr. C. S. Cherrier and Madame Louis de Lagrave, Mr. Antoine Levesque and Madame C. Brault, took up the collection.

“ The bell which had just been blessed, weighed about eighteen hundred pounds, and responded perfectly to the note, *la*. Its sound was sonorous and exceedingly pleasant. It was named Mary, Elizabeth, Genevieve, which names were inserted on the inner wall of the bell, together with the offering of it, that had been made by Madame Genevieve de Lagrave, with the date and place.

“ The collection amounted to £ 78, in addition to the ornaments and pieces of stuff laid upon the bell, which had cost at least a hundred dollars. These generous offerings were probably sufficient to put up a steeple, in harmony with the remainder of the building. The only thing that could not then be finished was the apex of the façade. . . . We are, however, persuaded that the generosity of some of our citizens, will soon cause

this little discrepancy to disappear, so as to complete that splendid edifice with which Catholic charity has endowed our city. The past is the best assurance for the future. Moreover, gifts continued to come in, during those days, while the newly baptized was left waiting under a handsome canopy, and each time that a pious curiosity caused the tones of its charitable voice to be heard.

“ We will add just one word more, which in revealing the secret of gratitude, may serve to stimulate the efforts of true charity. We are informed that as soon as that bell has been placed in the belfry, it will be rung every evening at nightfall, to apprise the Community, and to invite the faithful to pray for deceased benefactors. An indulgence will even be attached to the recital of the *De Profundis*, or some other prayer for the relief of the Souls in Purgatory.” (1)

And from that bell tower, the bell which was put up half a century ago, by the charity of Montreal, when the last glimmer of day is fading into night, still sends forth its melancholy peal, asking prayers for the dead ; and at the same moment in all our houses, hundreds of the poor, the infirm, and orphans kneel with the Sisters, to murmur the versicles of the *De Profundis* : “ Lord hear my prayer. Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication. Lord grant them eternal rest.”

Madame Gamelin always preserved a sentiment of the deepest gratitude to all the benefactors of her house.

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(1) *Mélanges Religieux*. May 28th, 1844.

She spoke of them in terms of deep respect mingled with grateful affection. She prayed every day for their intentions, and desired that all her Sisters should be faithful to their memory. She often and earnestly recommended to her Sisters, that they should be very cordial in their thanks, to any one from whom they received even the smallest offering, or the most inconsiderable alms.

The Ladies of Charity who had so powerfully assisted her in the foundation of her house, were the objects of her particular affection, and the most delicate solicitude. On the 15th November, 1843, she obtained for them the favor of a three days' retreat, which was preached in the new chapel by Mgr. Bourget himself. In the month of September of the following year, a second retreat was preached, by Fathers Leonard, Lagier and Guigues, of the Order of Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Mother Gamelin's great influence with people of the world attracted to these retreats, a considerable number of women and young girls. Some of them boarded at the Asylum, during those days, that they might the more perfectly observe recollection. It was a reminder and a happy repetition for them of those hours of prayer and solitude which they had formerly enjoyed, during their Retreats at the Convent.

The day of the closing of the retreat, was a holiday for the pensioners of charity. The ladies themselves served at a gala dinner, which was given to the old people and the orphans; they spent a great part of the

days amongst them, and with the best grace in the world, exhausted their ingenuity in interesting and amusing them. They retired in the evening, after the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, leaving sweetness and joy in all those hearts, that were deprived of the affection and the intimate joys of the domestic hearth ; and having rekindled their own tenderness and devotedness towards their neighbor, in the fervor of the love of God.

These festivals arranged for the poor, were a source of the greatest gratification to our venerated Mother. She rejoiced in the happiness that shone in the faces of those dear, old women whom she loved so much.

These dinners inaugurated by her have been perpetuated even to our own time.( 1 )

They are one of the most touching manifestations of affectionate interest, that our Ladies of Charity have inherited from their elders.

During the course of the year, 1845, the Community was afflicted by two trials. The first of these was the departure of Canon Prince, Chaplain of the Asylum. Being nominated on the 5th of July, as Coadjutor of Bishop Bourget, he was obliged to relinquish the duties of Chaplain, on the 10th of November following.

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( 1 ) Dating from 1850, the Cuvillier family gave a dinner every year to the old women of the Asylum. Melle Luce Cuvillier ( since dead ) and Mrs. F. A. Routh took pleasure in coming to serve at that banquet of charity.



Having become, however, Superior of the house, he could still maintain those ties therewith, which his devotedness and his great abilities had rendered both strong and precious. He was succeeded as Chaplain by Canon Truteau. ( 1 )

The second trial was the burning of the yellow house, which occurred in the month of October. Our Mothers had the sorrow of seeing disappear before their eyes, a prey to devouring flames, that first refuge of their fervor and of their labors, the cradle of the Community.(2) They could not restrain their tears, at the destruction of that house which had sheltered their first days of religious life ; those walls, which had inclosed the earliest hopes and the first fruits of the work, then so feeble and so precarious, of their beloved Foundress. But perchance they consoled themselves with the thought

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(1) Very Reverend, Alexis Frederick Truteau, Canon of the Cathedral of Montreal, was connected with our Community either as Confessor or Superior, for twenty-one years. He died on the 28th December, 1872, at the age of sixty-four years, and was buried in the vault of the Providence Church. His great benevolence, his paternal affection, his devotion to the spiritual and temporal interests of the Institute, place him in the very front rank of our benefactors.

He was particularly interested in the work of the Orphanage. In order to secure a more spacious dwelling for it, he caused the St. James' School which had been destroyed by fire in 1852, to be rebuilt at his own expense. It was as a commemoration of that generous munificence on his part, that the house has ever since borne the name of the St. Alexis Orphanage.

(2) After the Community moved into the new Asylum, the yellow house was rented.

that that sanctuary of holy memories might at some-time, have been turned to unworthy uses, and that now at least, the little room which had been so long the abode of the God of the tabernacle, should be protected forever, from profanation.

In the following month, November 21st, Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, three new companions came to swell the number of the professed. These were Sisters Genevieve, Marie du Crucifix, and Marie de la Nativité.

Our young Sisters may perhaps be interested in hearing a description of the division and the appearance of the Asylum, at the time when our first Mothers pronounced their vows there. Many changes have taken place since then. In following us, through the present wards and corridors, it will be easy for us to show them the successive changes which have considerably transformed that primitive edifice.

We shall take the chapel, as our starting-point in our journey. There, nothing is changed, except that some modest decorations now relieve the bareness of the walls. The nave, the sanctuary, the altar are the same as when they heard the prayers of our first Mothers, and listened to their pious canticles. The Statue of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, too, is still the same, which presided over the solemn engagements of the first professed, who were followed in the course of years, by almost seven hundred Sisters.

Leaving the chapel and taking our way towards the western portion of the house, we shall meet on the

right of the corridor, the sacristy, now replaced by the fore-hall, and the refectory of the priests. On the left was the Community room, now transformed into parlors. At the end of the hall, was a very small room, lighted by a half-glass door, which is still to be seen, and was that, in which our venerated Mother slept with her companion.

To the east of the chapel, the same division remains as formerly, but different rooms have changed their destination. The parlor of the pharmacy was then a common parlor ; the large pharmacy, a private parlor, where the priest who said Mass, usually took his breakfast. The little pharmacy, adjoining that room, then served at the same time as an office and pharmacy. The other side of the corridor was occupied by the novitiate.

On the second story, in the department of the lady boarders, the division has remained the same, but on the west side, the large ward for the infirm and that of the orphans, are now occupied by the Sisters' infirmary.

On the basement floor, under the Community room, were to be found the laundry, with a little ironing room ; then came the refectory of the Sisters, a store-room and the depot of the outside poor. In the space now occupied by the furnaces, were then to be seen the kitchen, the dispensary and the cellars.

Such was the Mother House, in 1844. Its household then consisted of a hundred and twenty persons.

## CHAPTER IX

1845—1846

ENLARGEMENT OF THE ASYLUM.—MOTIER GAMLIN WITH HER OLD WOMEN AND THE SICK.—FIRST CANONICAL VISIT OF MGR. BOURGET.—HIS INSTRUCTIONS ON THE VIRTUES OF THE RELIGIOUS STATE.

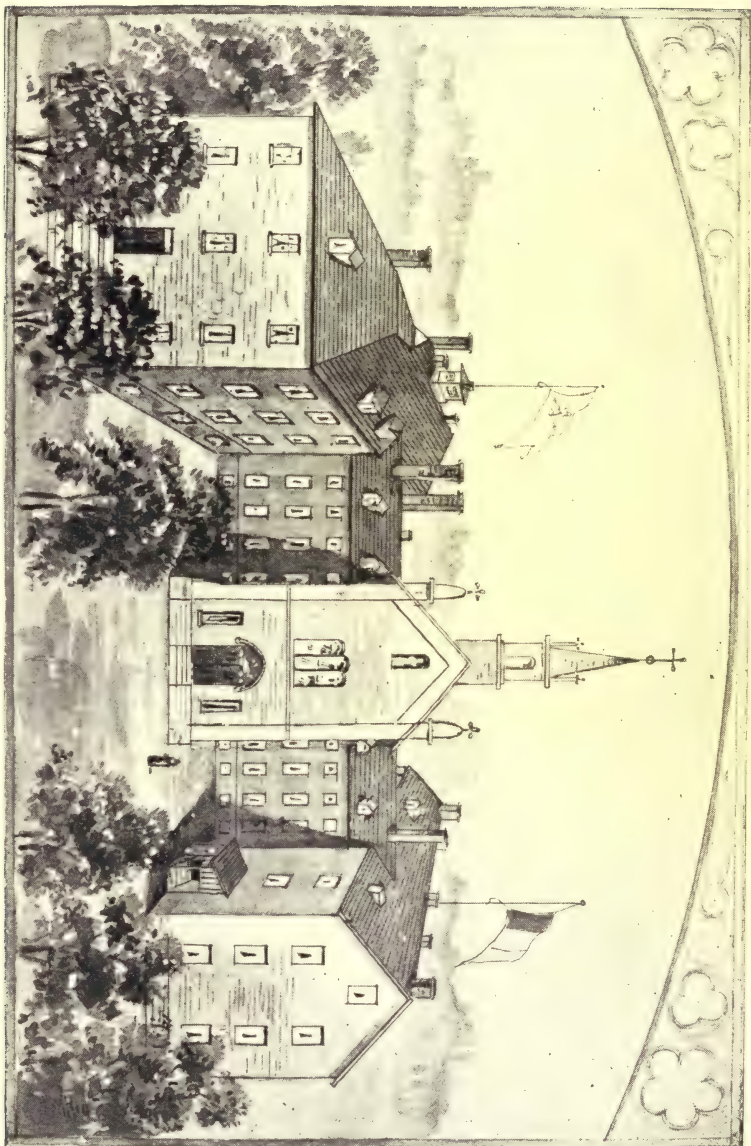
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Our venerated Foundress was constantly harassed by the financial embarrassments resulting from the various works which she felt obliged to undertake.

The poor flocked to her from all sides. Many people seem to find it hard to realize that even after a house of charity is built, it does not become self-supporting. It has to be heated, supported, kept in repair. The poor whom it shelters have to be fed, clothed, and to have attendance when they are sick. All of these things entail a whole series of expenses, for which continual resources are required. Scarcely was that Asylum, which the citizens of Montreal had erected through their own munificence, brought to completion, when demands upon it began to pour in from the outlying parishes of the diocese and even from the neighboring dioceses. In face of such a situation, Mgr. Bourget felt constrained to authorize the publication of the following notice in the "*Mélanges Religieux*."







VIEW OF THE PROVIDENCE ASYLUM

1809



“ For some time past numerous demands have been made upon the Asylum of Providence in Montreal, from all parts of the diocese. Many of these unfortunates, come thither from a distance, with much trouble and fatigue, to beg for admittance to the house. They declare that they have been sent, with full assurance that they should find refuge there. It has, therefore, become urgently necessary, to make it understood that from this time forth, at least, for several months to come, the Asylum which is already full, cannot receive any more aged or infirm persons than those that have been already admitted. It may be readily supposed that an Asylum which is just beginning, cannot suffice for every need. It would even be matter of astonishment that those hitherto accepted could be supported, were we not aware of the perpetual miracle of charity that is being worked in favor of that useful establishment. Therefore, we beg of the Reverend pastors to warn the poor of their parishes who may be disposed to make new demands upon the Providence Asylum, to dissuade them from such attempts, and from undertaking what unfortunately must prove a useless journey. ” (1)

Nevertheless, the compassionate heart of Mother Gamelin suffered from being obliged to close the door of her house upon so many poor, old people, who were altogether neglected by their indigent relatives; who had nothing that could be called a home, and not even the most elementary care, in the latter days of a life that

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(1) “*Mélanges Religieux*.” June 13th, 1843,

had been full of privation and of painful toil. She confided her sorrow and anxiety to her companions and to the Ladies of Charity, representing that it was necessary at all costs and without delay to enlarge the house. The Bishop gave his full approbation to the project. The Annals of the Community mention that important fact, in a few lines of impressive brevity. " May, 1845— Enlargement of the Providence Asylum by a wing, fronting on St. Catherine St. Dimensions, 100 feet by 28. Cost, £2000. Resources, the treasures of Providence. " Our holy Foundress had a boundless trust in that divine treasure, upon which she had so largely drawn during those years, without ever finding it diminished in the least.

The work was begun, at once, and vigorously pushed, so that by the Autumn of the following year, the old women and orphans were able to take possession of their new quarters, which were spacious and well lighted. Madame Gamelin rejoiced in all that could increase the well-being of her old people for whom she felt a real maternal tenderness. Her faith permitted her to see in them the suffering members of our Lord, and she always evinced in their regard, a profound and religious respect. She showed that same feeling after their death. She never failed to accompany their mortal remains, lighted taper in hand, to the door of the Asylum, when they were borne across its threshold to their last home. She exacted the same respect towards them from every one in the house. One day she severe-

ly reproved a novice who in her presence, had called one of the infirm women "Old So and So". "Can you not say Mrs. So and So", she observed. And the novice knelt down to ask for a penance. "Go to the chapel, the Superior said, and ask pardon of Our Lord, for it is He whom you have offended, in the person of that poor woman."

Every day, no matter what her occupations might be, she visited the wards for the infirm, quieting their little murmurs, and exhorting them to bear their troubles patiently, while waiting for that blessed abode, which, old age permitted them to behold so near at hand. Her exceeding, great charity for suffering and misfortune, could best be admired in her intimate relations with them. She delighted in rendering them the meanest and most repulsive services, which she did with a joy and gladness, that were evident in her whole person. One might have supposed that it was a mother caring for the most beloved of her children.

She loved to pray and also to make the Stations of the Cross with them in their hall. On Sunday, she assembled every one in the house to explain the catechism to them. She was habitually a fluent speaker, but especially when she spoke of things spiritual. It might then be said that her tongue was powerless to express the eagerness and the outpouring of her heart. Therefore, the hour of instruction was always impatiently expected and very much enjoyed. She pointed out their duties, gave them maternal advice and in-



dedicated whatever violations of the Rule might have been committed in the course of the week. Then she distributed little rewards to the orphans. When her pictures and medals were exhausted, she gave them some delicacy, such as a lump of sugar, and that bit of sugar given in an envelope, addressed to the good Mother, seemed to acquire a special savor, from that beloved and venerated name.

What shall be said of the marvellous gift which she possessed of assisting the dying? The sick often strove in advance to secure her presence at that supreme hour. She seemed to hold in her hands the key of heaven and to open its doors very wide, in the power which she possessed of reanimating their faith and confidence in the fruits of the Passion of our Lord. Therefore, according to the testimony of the older Sisters, it was most touching to hear her speak to the dying, of the infinite mercy of God, reciting the liturgical prayer of the Recommendation of the Departing Soul to God; remitting in some sort, to their Creator and Redeemer those souls with which Providence had entrusted her and for whom she had never ceased to pray. Such are the hallowed memories which generations of religious love piously to transmit, thus keeping alive the veneration of a saintly Foundress and imitating her zeal.

On Holy Thursday, Mother Gamelin washed the feet of twelve, old women in memory of Our Saviour's great act of humility. She wiped them with her own hands and kissed them in token of respect. The custom

has been kept up in our Community, renewing for the edification of our Sisters, the great lesson which Our Lord gave to His Apostles, on the true nature and duties of christian authority.

The charity of Mother Gamelin did not stop at the poor of her Asylum ; she continued as of old, to devote herself to those outside. We have seen in the preceding chapters, the first novices scarcely clothed with the holy habit, accompanying her in the visits which she had so long been making to the poor of the town. Especially, since the year 1828, she had not passed a single day, without visiting some of them ; she always showed the greatest anxiety to console them in their troubles, and to provide for their spiritual necessities, while relieving their temporal needs.

The depot ( 1 ) was another scene of her active charity. From the opening of the refuge in the yellow house, soup and other food, were distributed to all who presented themselves. That work is still in existence. Bread, soup and other provisions are still given out to the poor. Nor shall that work have an end, since we are assured by the word of the Lord that " The poor shall be always with us. "

However, the holy Bishop of Montreal exercised the greatest vigilance, lest the activity of the nascent Community, which spread over so wide a field, should prove detrimental to its recollection and spiritual progress.

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(1) This name is given to that department of the house, devoted to out door relief.

Because of that anxiety, he wished himself to initiate his daughters into the method of prayer of St. Ignatius Loyola. He consecrated the entire month of February of that year, to giving, himself, a series of monthly exercises to the assembled Community and novices, making the meditation, aloud, every morning and evening, in presence of the Sisters.

Those days of fervent prayer and holy recollection were soon followed by the annual retreat preached by the Reverend Father Martin, of the Company of Jesus. On the closing day, ten Sisters renewed their vows, which gave the most consoling ground for hope as to the future of the Asylum and the Community.

On the first day of April, Bishop Bourget paid his first canonical visit to the house. He announced his coming, in terms of paternal affection. "We are then going to visit you," he wrote, "who are the cherished portion of our flock, that we may know you still better and assure ourselves that you are animated as you should be, by a true spirit of charity, that you love the poor, that you care for the sick, that you bury the dead, that you willingly give refuge to widows and orphans, that, in a word, your distinctive characteristic is compassion for the afflicted ; for such is your vocation." (1)

That important visit terminated on the 3rd of May. His Lordship gave two instructions every day and presided over the meditation. What care and what labor did

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(1) Letter concerning the Pastoral visit of March 28th, 1845.

our holy Bishop bestow upon the formation of our Community. He was prodigal of his paternal advice, opportune counsels, wise instructions. Our Annals preserve their memory amongst its most valued possessions. In all those testimonies of his wisdom and zeal, we cannot too much admire that spirit of simplicity, humility and charity which he had at heart to inculcate in us, as being the characteristic of our Community, and of which he himself was an edifying and illustrious example.

“ We will begin by recommending to you,” wrote he, in one of his letters, “ the salutary practice of simplicity, a virtue so dear to the heart of Our Lord, and which St. Vincent de Paul proposes for your imitation in the first chapter of your holy Rules. (1)

“ ... When I began your Community, I could give you only my blessing and my advice. So poor a Bishop, in the circumstances in which I found myself, I could do nothing for you, in the temporal order. My aspirations did not rise very high, because you see, I had learned by experience, that when we keep ourselves always low, our heads are not likely to be turned. Such was the idea of your Father, St. Vincent de Paul, when he declared that his works were always little. The more he thought and spoke in that manner, the more were those works augmented and exalted in the eyes of men. In the same manner, the lower the opinion of your-

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(1) Pastoral of the 19th May, 1846.

selves, considering yourselves always as little in the sight of God, the more it will be His pleasure to increase your works. May experience, my dear Daughters, cause you to acquire humility, simplicity and charity ; and that is what I leave you as a legacy." (1)

" Daughters of Charity," he further said to them, " the features of your religious physiognomy should be those of the Queen of virtues ; since well-born daughters should resemble their mother."

And later he gave them this wise counsel : " Obligated as you are by the duties of your vocation, to be always in the world, you should be as roses in the midst of thorns. If you only appear there for works of charity, your Father, St. Vincent, promises you the full protection of God."

He also recommended the complete abandonment of themselves to divine Providence. " When you entered into religion, Our Very Dear Sisters, by the profession of your vows, you were received into the Asylum of Providence as into a cradle. Therefore it is, that you are commonly known as Sisters of Providence. Here, again, is made manifest to you, the spirit proper to your holy state, which should be a spirit of perfect abandonment to the dispositions of adorable Providence. For deprived of all human resources and nevertheless obliged to succor all miseries, you must exploit, by your truly filial confidence, the inexhaustible treasures of that amiable Providence, which has never yet failed you, nor

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(1) Instruction to the Community, March 25th, 1868.



never shall fail you, if you have recourse thereto, for your own needs and those of the poor.

“ Now, that you may always have before your eyes, the happiness which awaits you even on earth, if you perform with the requisite dispositions, the holy works with which Providence has entrusted you, we will quote here that beautiful passage, in which the prophet Isaias discloses to us in sublime language, the blessings which God is pleased to pour forth on houses of charity.

“ We beg of you, Our Very Dear Sisters, to hearken with the deepest attention, to the touching words which the Lord addresses to you, by the mouth of that great prophet.

“ Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and the harborless into thy house ; when thou shalt see one naked, cover him, and despise not thy own flesh.

“ Then shall thy light break forth as the morning and thy health shall speedily arise, and thy justice shall go before thy face and the glory of the Lord shall gather thee up.....

“ When thou shalt pour out thy soul to the hungry and shall satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise up in darkness, and thy darkness shall be as the noonday.

“ And the Lord will give thee rest continually, and will fill thy soul with brightness and deliver thy

bones and thou shalt be like a watered garden and like a fountain of water, whose waters shall not fail.

And the places that have been desolate for ages shall be built in thee ; thou shalt raise up the foundations of generations, and thou shalt be called the repairer of the fences, turning the paths into rest. " ( Isaias, Chap. LVIII )(1)

He encouraged them, not only to bear their crosses courageously, but even to love them in union with that of Our Lord.

" We are not ignorant," he wrote to them, " of the severe trials, which it has pleased Our Lord to make you undergo. Nor did we seek to conceal them from you, Our Very Dear Sisters, when we accepted your sacrifice. Furthermore, your institution on the day consecrated to honoring the sufferings of Mary, your conception in the heart of that afflicted Mother, your birth on Calvary, at the feet of a God dying of love, your mission which has for its object to spread the devotion to Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, all pointed to crosses and trials that should be yours, and the Lord who is always adorable in His designs, has not been sparing of them where you are concerned." (2)

He spoke to them another time of the love of the Cross.

" My dear Daughters," he said, " Our Lord has bequeathed to you His most precious possession, in giving you the Cross. That is what He himself chose,

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(1) Pastoral Letter of the 2nd Feb, 1868.

(2) Letter of the 28th March, 1845.

and it is the treasure which He wishes to share with you. The Cross of Jesus will strengthen you in your pains and sufferings, it will enrich you with graces and detach you more and more from the world, by attaching you to the things of God. (1)

"Your Father, St. Vincent de Paul," he told them, used to repeat very often. "A work that has neither difficulties, nor pains, nor crosses will not endure. When there are sufferings so much the better, for then it is the work of God."

He had placed our Institute under the special invocation of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors. He often insisted in his written instructions on the value and importance of that devotion, as well as on the devotion to the Passion of Our Lord."

"There is, Our very dear Sisters," he said, "an essential devotion in your Institute, and it is that of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors. Our Lord in His mercy," He declared, "has deigned to band your Community together, under the mournful banner of the desolate Virgin. Hence it is, that in His admirable Providence, he has willed that the seven Foundresses of that new Community, should take the habit on the 25th March, the day when Our Lord became incarnate in the womb of that glorious Virgin, and on which once more, according to many weighty authorities, he died on Calvary, before the eyes of His divine Mother. "Therefore, you have been born to religious life on

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(1) Instruction to the Community.

Calvary, near the Cross, at the feet of Jesus Christ, dying, and in the heart of Mary pierced with the seven-fold sword of sorrow, at the moment when all Nature was in mourning for the death of its Author. You are then, children of the dolors of Mary, and in that character are obliged to compassionate her cruel anguish yourselves, and to spread wherever possible, that salutary devotion. For it is as the corner stone upon which rests the edifice of your Community. " (1)

And in his lively anxiety to imprint this beautiful devotion, more and more deeply on the hearts of his daughters, he wrote to them, again, in the following terms :

" Be fully penetrated with the truth that it is at the foot of the Cross and in the heart of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, that you have been born to the religious life, and it is to the Precious Blood of Jesus and the bitter tears of Mary that you owe your astonishing growth in so short a time. May the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ give you a supernatural strength, that may serve as a rampart, to defend and protect you. May His sacred Wounds and Divine Blood be your delicious food, and a mystical beverage, by which you are nourished, intoxicated and satiated. May the sprinkling of His Precious Blood, wash and purify you from all your sins. May His death obtain eternal glory for you, and meantime, enable you to live in the faithful practice of all the virtues of religious.

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(1) Letter of the 3rd April, 1846.

“ May the Holy Cross preserve that Community, which has been founded, in our own day, to celebrate the mysteries of Calvary and to console the Mother of Sorrows, for the miseries which afflict our humanity.” (1)

He even went so far as to say : “ The devotion of Our Lady of Dolors is the devotion proper to your humble Institute. It was born and grew up therewith ; it has always been and always shall be its strength. When the one disappears so shall the other.” (2)

All that we have hitherto seen of Mother Gamelin shows to what an extent, she was imbued with those virtues and that spirit which the holy Bishop strove so hard to engrave upon the hearts of his daughters. In that respect she was, indeed, worthy to serve as their model, for it may be safely declared that she had practically begun a long time in advance her novitiate to the religious life, before she was clad in its livery.

She rejoiced exceedingly at all that was undertaken outside of her own Institute, for the relief of the unfortunate. Therefore, it was with the greatest joy that she received tidings of the foundation of the first contingent of Gray Nuns in the Red River Settlement. (3)

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(1) Pastoral of the 13th March, 1850.

(2) Letter of the 21st June, 1878.

(3) Now St. Boniface.



“Those poor Indians,” she said, “are at last going to have mothers to teach and take care of them”. Despite the extreme poverty of her own house, which was then in its infancy, she managed to contribute a small sum towards the work of that friendly Community. In remitting the amount to Mother Valade, who was going to take charge of that distant mission, she said: “In return will you offer for me a quarter of an hour, of your charitable work for the poor Indians? I am very avaricious of such coin, earned amongst the unfortunate, for with that, I hope to purchase my ticket of admittance into heaven.”

Reverend Mother Valade, deeply touched by her generosity, wrote somewhat later, the following letter from her new residence :

Red River,

July 23rd, 1845.

“ My dear Mother,

“You cannot imagine what pleasure it gives us to be able at length to express our deep gratitude, for the cordial charity, which you showed towards us, on the occasion of our departure from Montreal, for our distant missions. I hope that you have forgiven me, for not having written sooner. But numerous occupations and the difficulty of finding an opportunity to send out letters have been my reasons.

“ It has pleased me very much to hear of the growth of your beautiful work. I was often edified by the great good, that was accomplished through the instrumentality of your little Refuge. But I now see, with joy and admiration, that your work for the relief of the poor, is growing day by day. If Our Lord hears the prayers which I offer for you, He will not cease to bless your interesting Institute.

“ Will you also pray that in this far off country of our adoption, we may do all the good that Our Lord expects from us. The poor here are numerous and very miserable ; the children, in particular, are greatly in need of supervision. We have ninety of them in our little school. Besides which, we go every day a distance of about three miles to teach prayers and the Catechism to one hundred and two persons of both sexes, who have not yet made their First Communion. Most to these are as ignorant as it is possible to be. I give you these little details, because they are certain to be of interest to your compassionate heart. The Indians are very kind to us, and seem to be particularly fond of watching us teaching the children's classes. They pass up and down before the windows, that they may look in at us and they cannot conceal their surprise and admiration. They call us the Sisters *Meckatkosnaye Kwewok*, ( women priests. )

“ The country is very beautiful and extremely fertile ; the earth renders back a hundredfold all that is confided to it. As regards the climate, the cold has not

been any greater this year, than it was in Montreal, but the heat in the month of July was greater I think than in Canada. It blows a great deal, and when there is a storm, the thunder is terribly loud.

“ I beg of you then, dear Mother, to accept the expression of our gratitude. Pray for us, poor Indian missionaries, and believe me, dear Mother,

Your very devoted,

Sister Valade,  
Superior.

Mother Gamelin had very much at heart the work of the distant missions. It may well be believed, that when, as early as the year following her death, a colony of her own Sisters, directed their course to Oregon, their departure was attended by her holy desires and fervent prayers.

The Sisters of Charity in the United States, also preserved an affectionate remembrance of Mother Gamelin. Ever since her visit to them, an active correspondence had been maintained between their Community and ours. So that during the many years, that our Sister missionaries of Oregon, were obliged to remain some time in New York, when passing through there, “ Mother Gamelin’s daughters ” as they were affectionately called, were always sure of a cordial welcome from them. Besides the authentic copy of the Rules of St. Vincent de Paul, which were so fortunately placed at

Mother Gamelin's disposal, on the occasion of her visit to Emmitsburg, our Community owes them the unpublished conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, and the book of the Monthly Retreats, which were lent by Reverend Mother Jerome, Superior of their Mother House in New York. These valuable works, were copied by our Sisters and the Book of Retreats was printed by our Community.

It will be of interest to quote here, a letter from the Rev. Mother Valentina, Superior of the Baltimore house, which was addressed to Mother Gamelin.

St. Mary's Orphanage,

Baltimore, July 13th, 1845.

“ Reverend Mother,

“ What apologies shall I offer for my long silence. Your letter was thrice welcome and gave us a great deal of pleasure. Our orphans are much more numerous than at the time of your visit to us. We were obliged to add a new building to the Asylum, and we hope to see it completely finished before the cold weather.

“ I was glad to hear of the progress of your new Community. My sincerest wish is that the Almighty may favor it with His most abundant blessings, and penetrate each one of its members with the veritable spirit of true Sisters of Charity.

“ Lately, I had the happiness of revisiting our Mother House at Emmitsburg. It had undergone various improvements since you saw it. The house, which our Sisters have added, is much more spacious than the old. Our beloved Mother Xavier told me that she had received a letter from you ; she was very glad to hear that your works are progressing so favorably. That good Mother’s health is very precarious.

“ I felt a sensible pleasure in learning that you had so good and devoted a father, in the person of your saintly Bishop. May God spare him to you, for many years yet, and may he have the happiness of seeing your Community extend into as many places as ours has done. I love Canada ; I hardly know why, except that it was very dear to Father Deluol. There was a time when it was currently reported that we were to have a mission there. I had hoped very much, then, if such were the will of God, to have been chosen one of the first.

“ Our Sisters salute you very affectionately, though not all of them have the pleasure of knowing you personally ; to endear you to them all, it suffices to know that you are Sisters of Charity.

“ Please, dear Mother, remember me to all your Sisters, and ask them to pray for one who is so warmly interested in their happiness,

Yours very affectionately,

Sister Valentina,

Superior.



## CHAPTER X

1846

FOUNDATION OF THE MISSION OF LONGUE POINTE.— SUDDEN DEATH OF SISTER MADELEINE.— LETTER OF MOTHER GAMELIN.— WORK FOR AGED AND INFIRM PRIESTS.— FOUNDATION OF THE MISSION OF PRAIRIE DE LA MADELEINE.— A CONFLAGRATION IN THE VILLAGE.— POVERTY OF THE HOSPICE.

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IT was in the village of Longue Pointe, situated some miles from Montreal, on the banks of the St. Lawrence, that Mother Gamelin founded her first mission. Did she even at that moment foresee the advantages, that such a site might offer in the future, for one of those works which her Community would be called upon to found? We do not know; but if she had such previsions, they were justified by the event, since two of the most important works originated in that place, the one for Deaf Mutes and that for the Insane.

In the Spring of the year 1846, Mother Gamelin installed two of her daughters in the little house, on the farm of St. Isidore, where they were to open an elementary school.

" Next day, " as the Annals relate, " Very Reverend Canon Blanchet, (1) Chaplain of the Mother House, went thither to bless the chapel, and to say the first Mass there. A little later, Mgr. Prince, the ecclesiastical Superior, canonically erected the Stations of the Cross there. During the first year, the class consisted of about thirty day-scholars. They were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar and especially Catechism. " In that Mission the Sisters practised all the works proper to the Institute, hospitality to the orphans and the infirm, the visits to the sick, etc. After the first year, in order to eke out their resources, they took boarding pupils, which they continued to do until 1870.

In 1847, Mother Gamelin caused the house, which had become too small for their needs, to be considerably

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(1) Very Rev. Canon A. M. Blanchet was born at Saint Pierre, Island of Orleans, on the 22nd of August, 1797 ; he was ordained priest, June, 21st, 1821; consecrated Bishop of Walla Walla, Wash. Ter. U. S. on the 27th September, 1846 and transferred to the diocese of Nesqually, May 30th 1850. He resigned his See, with the title of Bishop of Ibera, *in partibus*, on the 14th Feb., 1879 and died at Vancouver, on the 25th Feb. 1889.

Founder of our Missions in the American West, in Washington Ter. Oregon and Montana, Mgr. Blanchet, died at our Hospice of St. Joseph, in Vancouver, Wash., where he spent his last years. It was a great consolation for our Sisters, to take care in his old age, of him, towards whom they were under such heavy obligations. To the end of his life, the venerable prelate, always proved himself the devoted protector of his dear daughters of Providence.

enlarged. During the fourth year of their stay there, the Sisters met with a great affliction. This was in the loss of one of their number, Sister Madeleine, in the world Mathilde Davignon, who died of an apoplectic stroke on the 11th December, 1850, at the age of thirty four years. She had been three years on that mission, and filled the office there of class mistress. Her devotedness, her ability and her talent for teaching, as well as her solidly religious spirit, all combined to make her a very valuable subject. She exercised a great ascendancy over her pupils, possessing the secret of making herself at once loved and respected by them.

She had a tender devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Passion of our Lord, and spent nearly all her leisure moments at the foot of the Tabernacle. On the morning of her death, she received Holy Communion, and in the afternoon, after her class, as if moved by a presentiment, she invited her pupils to make the Stations of the Cross with her, for the intentions of whichever Sister of that mission should be the first to die.

"Never," said one of them later, "shall we forget those Stations of the Cross, which she made aloud, meditating on the Passion of Our Lord, and with so much fervor and unction, that we could not help mingling our tears with hers."

About seven in the evening, she asked permission to go to bed, saying that she was suffering from a violent headache. A few hours later, she had breathed her

last, and the priest who was hastily summoned, found her a corpse. The grief and consternation of religious and pupils were extreme ; the first had lost in her a Sister, and the others a friend and a real mother.

Mgr. Bourget and Mother Gamelin, paid a high tribute to her merits, and warmly deplored her death. On the very next day, Mgr. Bourget wrote as follows to the parish priest of Longue Pointe, who had imparted to him the sad tidings.

“ It is a real loss for the parish as well as for the Community. I deplore it as much as any one, but I adore and am resigned. It is the will of God, and we may hope that she has already taken her place in the choir of virgins.”

Mother Gamelin communicated her impressions of that sad loss to the Sisters of Laprairie, in a letter written some days later :

To the Much Honored Sister Larocque,  
Sister Servant at Laprairie. (1)

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(1) Sister Larocque, one of the Seven Foundresses, was the first Superior of the house of Providence at Laprairie. In 1853, she founded a branch at Santiago de Chili. Her humility, her great kindness, her peculiar deference to every one, endeared her to all who knew her. She died in that distant mission, on the 21st Feb., 1857, aged thirty-eight years. Her body was buried in the ground, of that mission she had founded three years before, and where her mortal remains still wait the resurrection.

“ My dear Daughters,

“ You have learned, no doubt, of the death of our dear Sister Madeleine, through the letter which Sister Elizabeth wrote you at my request. Our poor Sister rendered her last sigh on Saturday, at 2 o'clock in the morning, and I did not know till six. She was ill only seven hours. Dr. Archambault did not consider her in any danger. The Sisters tell me that the scene which followed on that night was indescribable. Poor Sister Praxede lost consciousness.

“ I arrived at the farm about seven o'clock, and remained until Sunday after Vespers, to console them a little. Our dear Sister had a *Libera* sung for her, at Longue Pointe, before the departure of the body. She had quite a fine funeral, followed by fifty or sixty carriages.

“ You see, my dear daughters, how the Lord in His great mercy visits us. I think so often of my dear Sisters, on the missions, whom I would wish to have near me always. While praying for our poor Sister, we must not be insensible to the blows by which we are stricken ; we must draw spiritual profit from them, since they show us that we must be always ready to render our account, and to appear before God, at the hour when we least expect. Let us reflect that our good God loves us, since He chastises us as a father. As you are aware, the death of Sister Madeleine is a



real loss to our Community. I do not know whom we shall put in her place.

“ Let us cast all our tribulations and crosses at the foot of Our Mother, remembering that we are her daughters and that we must share her dolors.”

Your Mother,

Sister Gamelin,

Superior.

This letter is a proof of the affection, which the good mother displayed towards her daughters, and how sedulously she strove to console them in the pains and afflictions which befell the Community.

Two years later, our Sisters opened at Longue Pointe, an Asylum for the Insane, at St. Isidore, from which they had removed with their pupils, to install themselves in a stone house, forty feet long by thirty wide, which had been purchased with all its dependencies, and a tolerably extensive piece of land, (1) near the parish church.

At the farm of St. Isidore, the class-rooms were converted into cells, and seventeen insane people put in possession of them. Of that number, eight were brought

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(1) Besides the house which has undergone important alterations, that land at present comprises the cemetery of the religious and that of the Sister Tertiaries.

thither from the Asylum, where Mother Gamelin had received them as early as 1844, in the little house secluded within the enclosure of the garden. Since her adoption, after the death of her husband, of the poor idiot, Dodais, she had always taken a special interest in these unfortunates.

God blessed that work, as He did all those which she undertook. That little Hospital of St. Jean de Dieu, which accommodated at the time of its opening seventeen patients, now numbers seventeen hundred.

In that same year, the farm of St. Isidore gave hospitality to aged or invalid priests, for whom the indefatigable charity of Mother Gamelin had opened a refuge as early as 1846, in a house belonging to Judge Pike, which was quite near the Asylum, at the corner of Mignonne and St. Hubert Sts. She had bought it for that purpose. It was known as the Hospice St. Joseph.

Now, on the 8th July, a disastrous fire reduced to ashes the whole of the St. Lawrence and part of the Quebec Suburbs. By a signal protection of heaven, both the Providence Asylum and the Hospice St. Joseph, though the latter was of wood, escaped from that disaster. Close beside them, the Cathedral and the Bishop's palace were destroyed. Fourteen hundred houses met with destruction, and nine thousand persons were rendered homeless.

The Asylum opened its doors to a multitude of these unfortunates, and all of its apartments, not excepting the chapel, were converted into dormitories, where nothing was heard, save sighs and lamentations.

The priests of the Hospice St. Joseph, touched by the sad situation of the Bishop and the clergy of his household, spontaneously offered him their dwelling, and confided to the Sisters of Providence, the care of finding them another abode.

They managed to find accommodation for them all at the farm of St. Isidore, where they spent the next three years, until the temporary Cathedral and the present Bishop's palace had been constructed in the St. Antoine Suburbs. In the meantime, the chapel of the Asylum was used for all the public offices of that quarter, and the Bishop officiated there at all the pontifical ceremonies.

Almost simultaneously with the establishment at Longue Pointe of the house of St. Isidore, Mother Gamelin opened a house at Laprairie, by request of the pastor, Rev. Father Tellier, S. J., and through the earnest entreaties of the Association of the Ladies of Charity which had been organized in that parish in the year 1842. (1)

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(1) In one of the old account books of the Fabrique at Laprairie, one item is worthy of note. In the accounts of the Church Wardens for 1692, there is question of a sum paid to the Sisters of Providence, for 1 lb. of yellow wax. Now who were these Sisters of Providence? We believe that they were poor girls received by Mother Bourgeoys, in 1681, under the name of Daughters of Providence, with the view of training them to work. Mother Bourgeoys, had opened, for that purpose, a work-room, called the Providence. "Some Sisters, were entrusted with these girls, whom they were anxious to put in the way of earning their own livelihood, by the products of their labor. The Association was suppressed in 1694.

Madame Gamelin felt herself the more inclined to respond to that appeal, because that foundation was being made, in many respects, under the same circumstances, as that of the foundation in Montreal. There also, a society of ladies, had taken the initiative in visiting and sewing for the poor. They had even rented a house to shelter such amongst them as had no decent dwelling. It was that house, which the ladies turned over to Mother Gamelin on the 15th May, 1846.

It sheltered, at that time, eight infirm old women, who had been placed in charge of a pious woman, named Emmelie Renaud. (1)

This house was solidly built in stone and without any notable changes still serves as a dwelling-house for our Sisters. The arrival of the Sisters, was a source of great joy to the poor families of the village. The good Mother spent some days with her daughters to render easier the beginnings of their new existence. She took particular trouble in arranging the little oratory which was so soon to receive Our Lord, whose sacramental Presence is the great support, and the chief consolation of religious life.

The Sisters had the joy of hearing the first Mass in their oratory on the 26th of the same month. Mgr. Prince, by whom it was celebrated, afterwards assembled the Ladies of Charity, and having congratulated them on the work

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(1) This lady remained in the house until her death, which occurred on the 24th Dec., 1865. She rendered invaluable services to our Sisters.

which they had thus far accomplished, he strongly exhorted them to lend the support of their zeal and devotedness to the Sisters. Some days later, Mgr. Bourget brought the powerful encouragement of his presence and his words to the religious and the Ladies. He promised the latter, the privilege of a Mass said for their intention on the Monday of each week, at which an instruction should be given by one of the Jesuit Fathers of the parish.

In spite of the slender resources of that house, which was entirely dependent on public charity, the foundation began under the happiest auspices, when a terrible trial threatened that fortunate beginning, with destruction.

On the night of August 5th, a portion of the village was destroyed in a conflagration. More than three hundred houses, including the presbytery and a portion of the Hospice, became the prey of the flames. The fire stopped at the church.

The Sisters and infirm poor, to the number of fourteen had to take refuge on the river banks. Our venerated Mother hastened thither, in the morning on hearing the sad news, only to find them surrounded by hundreds of unfortunates, homeless and shelterless, who were gathered about some furniture and clothing which they had managed to save from disaster.

After having, with her accustomed cordiality, offered them consolation and encouragement, the good



Mother immediately returned to the Asylum, taking with her the fourteen old women from the Hospice, while the religious found refuge with the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame. She came back frequently, however, in company with Sister Caron, to distribute the help that was most urgently required, to those families in distress. In the interval, relief Committees were organized in the city and in the neighboring country, to assist the victims of the fire. Our Sisters were charged to deliver the gifts in money, food or clothing, and Mother Gamelin, assisted by Mother Caron, presided the very next day, at the first distribution.

The Sisters were enabled after the most necessary repairs, to return to their house on the 24th of September, and the poor followed them thither in the month of November.

In the meantime, the poverty of the house continued to be extreme. Sometimes the very necessities were wanting. Mother Gamelin was on the point of recalling her religious. She was, however, obliged to yield to their entreaties, since they could not make up their mind to abandon their poor. Reverend Father Tellier and the Ladies of Charity added their entreaties to theirs, and set to work, by collections and bazaars to pay, not only the expense of the repairs necessitated by the fire, but also to secure to them the ownership of that house for which they had to pay an annual rental of 16 louis. The Ladies succeeded in getting from the relief committee, a donation of 50 louis;

Father Tellier even had the kindness to go down to Quebec for the purpose of soliciting alms. His efforts proved successful and he brought back the sum of 147 louis. Thanks to his help, they were able to acquire the property, though a debt of 400 louis remained.

That was the last act of zeal and devotedness on the part of Father Tellier, in favor of that foundation, in which he had had so considerable a part. On the 7th December, he was replaced in the pastorate of Laprairie by the Rev. Father Mainguy. Less than a year later, on the 16th October, Mother Gamelin was obliged to open a ward for orphans in that mission, since there were so many poor, forsaken children who could find no place in other institutions. To provide for the needs of these new boarders, the Sisters imposed upon themselves, an increase of work, and greater privations, going even so far as to depend for their food on what was left by the poor. And here was another trait of resemblance to the foundation of the Mother House, as may be shown by the following paragraph, from the Annals of that epoch :

“ We only ate bread once a day. Our ordinary food was pea soup, pork and potatoes. In Lent and on abstinence days, our dinner consisted of pea soup and a plain potatoe pie, without bread or butter. We never bought either tea or coffee, but we sent to beg in the village for leaves left after the tea had been drawn. One day, a gentleman gave the orphans fifty cents to buy molasses bandy. The Sister Servant asked them which they liked better, molasses candy or bread, and they

cried with an accord : " Bread ! bread ! " for bread was to them what cakes would be to the children of the rich. One year, we did the whole of Lent, with a fifty lb. tenet of butter, for a household of thirty-seven people."

Though the annals do not expressly mention the fact, there is reason to believe that the bread was often eaten dry than otherwise. That touching spirit of sacrifice was often rewarded by evident interpositions of Divine Providence.

One day, the pastor of the parish notified the Sisters that he would be obliged to remove the Blessed Sacrament from the oratory, unless the door of the Tabernacle could be covered with a veil. Now there were only fifteen shillings in the house, with which to do the marketing for the week. The Sister Servant, much distressed, conferred with her Sisters, and they all agreed to do without meat for a week, rather than to be deprived of their most precious possession. The Superior taking the fifteen shillings, went to town for the purchase of a veil, and while she was gone, a young girl came to the parlor, saying to the Sister who received her : " I made a promise, for a favor which I obtained yesterday and come to fulfil it at once, by giving fifteen shillings to the poor." It is easy to imagine the outburst of gratitude, when on the return of the Superior, they were able to put into her hands the fifteen shillings which she had just spent for the Divine Prisoner.

Another day, there were only a few cents in the treasury, and the Sisters and the poor heard holy Mass

in honor of St. Joseph, begging him to come to their help. About nine o'clock, an unknown person rang at the parlor door. "I am a traveller," he said, "I have just escaped death, and I promised if I escaped danger, to give an alms to the poor. I am glad to fulfil my promise in favor of your house." And he handed the Sister the sum of two louis.

These instances of Providential intervention might be multiplied did the dimensions of this volume permit. At the present time, the mission of Laprairie is still poor, but it prospers. Besides its outside works of charity, it supports about forty poor and infirm women. The Association of the Ladies of Charity who act as auxiliaries to our Sisters, now looks back upon a half century of existence, and includes at this moment one hundred and twenty members.

## CHAPTER XI

1846—1847

SECOND EPISCOPAL VISIT. — VIRTUES AND DEVOTIONS OF MOTHER GAMELIN. — HER SPIRIT OF ABNEGATION AND SELF-SACRIFICE. — THE CHARACTER OF HER DIRECTION. — HER SOLICITUDE FOR THE NOVITIATE. — HER INTERIOR TRIALS.

On the 16th of April, 1846, Mgr. Bourget made his second pastoral visit to the Asylum of Providence. Mother Gamelin always solicited that favor most earnestly, because of the great advantages resulting thence to her

Community. Being already charged with the direction of several works of charity, she dreaded the full weight of responsibility, and was more fully sensible than any one else, of the need of assistance from her Bishop. "There alone," she said, "I feel at peace, like a child in presence of a good father."

One of the resolutions of her first Retreat, was "Blind obedience with regard to my Superiors, in all things." (Journal 1846.)

She was not only punctilious in deferring entirely to their judgment and direction, but even showed a real gladness in the sacrifices which she sometimes had to make of her personal ideas or feelings, or in the wounds inflicted upon her self-love by such criticisms as might be made. In regard to herself, her sentiments were of the most humble. "I can do nothing of myself," she often repeated to her Sisters, "neither by my talents nor by my means, but I trust in Divine Providence, who will inspire you with what you should do to relieve the suffering members of Our Lord. Then, by your example you can induce others to help you by giving of their superfluities."

Upon another occasion, she said to them: "I do not pretend to believe, my dear Daughters, that we can do great things like other Communities; but we shall do the little that other Communities cannot do, and since we cannot do more, the good God will find that little pleasing in His sight."



Nor did her humility consist alone in words. She translated it into acts.

During the Retreats, she kissed the feet of the Sisters, begging them to pray for her. She always knew how to repair most humbly, and even in regard to her inferiors, the faults which had inadvertently escaped from the quickness of her temper. One day, when she thought she had given pain to a young Sister, she threw herself on her knees, before her to ask pardon. That was in fact, one of the principal points in her examens and resolutions. "Much sweetness and charity, towards my inferiors," wrote she in her Journal of Retreat, "forgetting their most glaring faults and seeing only those that concern myself. (Journal 1846. ) "

In the parlor, she received the poor with so much cordiality that it might have been supposed they were her relations or dear friends. She showed the greatest regret when unable to satisfy their demands, so that, at least these poor people could carry away with them the inestimable boon of affectionate sympathy. She exercised the most careful supervision over the visiting of the poor in their homes that it might be accomplished regularly. She always managed to send some of the Sisters, night or day, to sick persons who desired their attendance. The Sisters had to render an exact account to her, of how they performed these duties, and she gave them much excellent advice upon the subject.

On the 21st of April, 1849, Mgr. Bourget, inaugurated in our chapel, the Forty-Hours of Mary Desolate.

This touching devotion, so dear to the heart of our venerated Foundress, is perpetuated even to our own day. Every year, on Good Friday, at five o'clock in the evening, the religious and all the household assembled in the chapel. After the singing of the *Stabat Mater*, there was a sermon and the recitation of some prayers, amongst which was the following, prescribed by the ceremonial: "My tender Mother, when I see Thee, plunged in the deepest affliction, I would not leave Thee alone, to shed torrents of tears, in thy solitude. No I will not forsake Thee, I wish to mingle my tears with thine to share thy sorrows and those of my Redeemer."

Seven tapers were kept constantly burning during the Forty Hours of Mary Desolate; some of the Sisters always remained in prayer, succeeding each other, every half hour during the day, and every two hours, during the night.

Mgr. Bourget donated the seven first tapers, which were lighted before the Mother of Sorrows, at the inauguration of those pious exercises. "It is my desire", he said to Mother Gamelin, "that the seven first tapers burned there, on that occasion, should be paid for by a poor person. And as with good reason I believe myself to be the poorest person in my diocese, I will hand you the price of those tapers."

The exercises ended on Easter Sunday at five in the morning. In presence of the Community assembled in the Chapel, the Superior recited the following prayer:

“O glorious Virgin, most amiable Mother, give thyself up, no longer to sorrow and affliction. Thou hast wept enough, it is time to dry thy tears, Thy Divine Son is risen. There He is, behold Him ; His face, His wounds, His holy soul, His sacred body, everything about Him, is resplendent with majesty, light and beauty ; He has triumphed over death, conquered hell, destroyed sin. Accept, O my tender Mother, the sentiments of my heart, which comes to share in the joy and gladness of thine.”

At the conclusion of that prayer, the choir of religious joyously proclaimed the resurrection of the Saviour, by the solemn singing of the *Regina Cali*, which was followed by the morning prayer and meditation.

It was also, our saintly Mother, who in spite of the objections urged against the novelty of the devotion, succeeded in getting printed for the first time in our city, the effigy of the Scapular of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors. (1)

She sought by every means in her power, to spread that devotion. She had promised to do so, and she was determined to keep that promise.

For the rest, whatever touched upon the devotion to the Dolors of Mary was dear to her. For it was from that devotion that she had derived so much consolation during the trials of her widowhood. Her Journal of Retreats, no less than her frequent exhortations,

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(1) See Souvenir of the Twenty-fifth anniversary of Mother Gamelin, p. 21.

show how near was this anxiety to her heart. During one of her first retreats, she wrote under the form of a resolution :

“ I must act so as to cause the devotion to Our Lady of the Seven Dolors to be propagated, especially in all our houses ; as also that of the Stations of the Cross, having learned that at the foot of the Cross, we can draw as from an inexhaustible source ; and with a little courage, obtain all the perfection demanded by our holy state.”

In her Journal for 1849, she wrote : “ I am going to make the Stations of the Cross for the conversion of sinners, for that is my daily practice. I have taken the resolution to make it every day in the year, if my occupations permit. I experience so much consolation in meditating on the Passion of my Saviour.” (Journal 1849).

In a previous Retreat, after having taken the resolution of making them often, she asked pardon of God “ for her negligence in so often putting off that exercise, which He seemed to demand of her, and she took the resolution, never to pass a day without invoking the name of Mary, Mother of Sorrows, by some pious ejaculations.” (Journal 1846). And four years later, in her last Retreat, faithful to the same sentiment and the same duty, she terminated a passage relating to her trials, by this paragraph which shows with what constancy she practiced those devotions which she had taken so much to heart. In being the child of the Mother of Sorrows, one must expect to carry the Cross in this world, I

will therefore, come very often to pray at the feet of that good Mother. I will beg her to have pity on me in the trials and tribulations by which I am continually disturbed. I will consider, that as she has particularly chosen me to be her daughter, I am obliged, to console and honor her and to propagate devotion to her as far as lies in my power, wherever there may be Sisters of Charity.

“ We have made her that promise, if we obtain through her intercession, a statue, similar to that which the good Sisters of Emmitsburg in the United States, have the happiness of possessing. ” (Journal 1850).

She found an irresistible attraction, in meditating on the Passion of Our Lord and the Sorrows of His Mother, which were never separated in her thoughts. Her heart melted within her, in considering the sufferings attendant upon the Flight into Egypt, the Losing and the Finding of Jesus, the anguish of Gethsemane, or the meeting of Jesus with His Mother after His condemnation, and during the ascent to Calvary. “ His Mother ”, she used to repeat, with tears, “ His Mother was there, standing beside the Cross ! ”

Her faith and piety made her vividly realize all these great sufferings, and the Man-God, who had called her to follow Him in the difficult way of the Passion, admitted her to partake of His chalice, by depriving her in childhood and youth of her most legitimate affections, and by subjecting her in her maturity, at an



age when habits of mind and character are strongly rooted, to the trials and difficulties of obedience and of the common life ; and by inflicting on her those interior trials, the sensible withdrawal of the Divine presence, which caused her the liveliest anxiety and the deepest sorrow. In the midst of these trials, she drew her strength and courage, solely from her union with Jesus suffering. " I have taken the resolution," she wrote during that same Retreat, " to make new efforts over myself, saying : Lord I wish to follow Thee, to Calvary. It is there that I will go every day, to gain courage to endure the trials and sufferings, inseparable from my state. This day has been spent in meditating on the Passion and the Dolors of the Blessed Virgin. A serious and profound meditation, which condemns all my conduct. " ( Journal 1850 ).

The dominating influence in the life of Mother Gamelin, appeared to be an incessant effort of grace, to lead her to greater detachment, from herself and from all things and a constant disposition of her will to correspond with that supernatural attraction, despite the cruel sacrifices, which it often demanded of her.

" It seems to me," she wrote, in 1848, " that the good God, is going to grant me that spirit of self-sacrifice and of abnegation, in all things, for which I have so earnestly asked during my Retreat. I have clearly perceived that the great predominating fault in me, is the

seeking of self in all my actions." And she concluded her Journal of that Retreat by these resolutions :

"For my daily penance, I will make several times a day, acts of renunciation in my thoughts, words, actions, judgments and will ; in my food and in the ease which I might procure for myself. I will impose a penance on myself each time that I fail. The subject of my particular examen, — given by Mgr. Prince, — will be renunciation. Virtue of abnegation, wherein I must exercise myself, all the year." (Journal 1848).

Her sacrifices were continual. She suffered incessantly whether from interior troubles, from trials and contradictions that came from without, from the exigencies of her daily duties, or from new emergencies. This is evident from her Journal of Retreats : "I accept," she wrote, "the crosses, humiliations and sacrifices, in expiation of those sins of my life which have saddened Thee. I will no longer complain since it is necessary that I should suffer something for Thee, happy if by suffering on earth, I can gain heaven." (Journal of 1849).

"The sacrifices which I have to make every day, have been sent to make me die to myself and save my soul." And she took the resolution to implore the help of the Mother of Sorrows, in the trials and tribulations by which she was constantly tormented. (Journal of 1850).

Although her life in the world, had not been sinful, nor even light, she deeply regretted and bitterly

reproached herself with the enjoyment she had taken in certain frivolous amusements, and the gratification of self-love to which she had sometimes yielded. Her Journal often reveals that constantly recurring self-reproach, which caused her to make so many acts of deep humility. In the Retreat of 1846, which was made at the time of her second renewal of vows ;— and the first concerning which, she has left many notes,—which are the more interesting, that they reveal her real dispositions and her spiritual condition, during the first years of her religious life. She wrote the following lines :

“ The prayer moved me deeply ; the enormity of my faults ; all the sins of my life were presented to my mind, and I silently meditated upon the various phases of my life ; in every one, I had a horror of myself. How many sins and imperfections ! What levity in my conduct, to please the world. O my God, what shall I do, to repair all that, after so many graces have been lost. What should I do, at the present time. I, a worm of the earth, dust and ashes, at the head of a growing Community, which I am so little capable of leading, and where so much virtue and such good example are required.” (Journal 1846).

In the following year, under the influence of that same feeling which had lost nothing of its intensity, she wrote with the same touching accent of humility and sincerity :

“ In silence, I reviewed my entire life and I found therein a great number of salient faults. I reflected

that I must do penance, and it is most just that I should suffer in this life, to expiate the sins of my past existence. I find myself unworthy to be at the head of a Community of Virgins, who have never known the evil that reigns in the world, being all pure in the sight of the Lord, in comparison with a woman who has taken part in worldly amusements and with good reason, deserves to be punished and humiliated." And at the end of her life, looking back upon those paths, by which Our Lord had led her, she addressed to Him, this fervent thanksgiving: "O my God, how good and merciful hast Thou been to me! Thou hast led me by the hand, through so many painful periods of my life, while I have so frequently betrayed Thee. How often I have been unfaithful to my promises, and in spite of all that, Thou hast not ceased to pursue me, in order that I might reach that place which Thou hast destined for me from all eternity. What gratitude do I not owe Thee, O my God, for all thy benefits! I should perhaps, have lost myself in the world, for I received, every day the reward of those works, thou didst nevertheless inspire me to accomplish, by listening with too much complacency, to the praises of my Refuge for the aged and infirm." (Journal of 1850.)

The intensity of her regrets and her self-reproach, for sentiments which to the natural point of view, appeared innocent enough, may seem unreasonable and excessive to worldly minds, that have never understood

the depth and the full meaning of those austere words of Our Lord, to His disciples: "If any one will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up His Cross and follow Me." The more entirely a soul wishes to respond to that invitation, the more must she deny herself; "lose herself" to use the expression of the Divine Master, by the development in herself of the christian life.

Our venerated Mother experienced all the rigor of the bitter struggle which the disciple of Christ is obliged incessantly to maintain with himself, in attaining the loss of one's soul, in order to find it; and by the groanings and wrestlings of nature, to form in himself that new man which the Divine Master wills should be created in him.

It is a great mistake, and one which is too often fostered by the lives of saints and other illustrious christians, which are written in an exclusively eulogistic spirit, to suppose that those great souls had but to obey, calmly and almost passively, the irresistible attraction of grace, to which they yielded continually and without effort. That holiness which is certainly the triumph of grace and the masterpiece of the Divine Author of "all perfect gifts" is also the triumph of the will corresponding to that grace, though not without struggle, resistance or even failure.

The special characteristic of the saints is that they rose up and corrected themselves, after each fault and each infidelity; with them, the perfection was not a



mere ideal, such as is the case, with many souls, who are elevated, indeed, but weak, and who are allured by the beauty of virtue, but do not find in themselves a faith that is robust enough to give power of perseverance in that long and rugged road. The desire of the saints, if firm and constant, proceeds from a lively faith sustained by prayer, humility, and a force which feeble and corrupt nature cannot give. The whole secret of their perseverance and of their progress, is comprised in those two sayings of the Apostles :

“ I can do all things in Him who strengthens me,” (1) and “ My Just man lives by faith”. (2)

Our Mother, in common with all the saints, had to surmount all the difficulties of the christian life. She suffered from them, and frequently bemoaned them.

“ Weak and miserable creature,” she cried, “ I tremble when I have to make any sacrifice.” (Journal of 1848 ). Some years before her death, and during her last Retreat, she wrote : “ Dryness, aridity, scarcely am I endurable to myself. My God, how hard is my heart, and what combats will be necessary to enable it to reach its end. How slothful and cowardly is that heart harder than stone ! Make it, I implore Thee, come forth from its lethargy.” (Journal of 1850).

She very clearly analysed, in the light of God, the obstacles and the particular difficulties which she had

(1) 1 Philip, IV ; 13.

(2) 2 Hebrews, X ; 38.

to encounter in herself, and in her state of life, while working for her perfection.

“ The responsibility of my office of Superior,” wrote she, “ my want of submission in the daily sacrifices, the difficulty which I experience in correcting infidelities against the Rule, my disposition at times too quick and at others too cowardly, the omissions in my duties, which are so far reaching, all this disturbs me in my prayers and even interferes with my sleep.” (Same Retreat).

She was sustained in the struggle by a vehement desire ; she was constantly incited by the love of God to climb the rugged paths, leading to those radiant heights, which in that sublime struggle only the violent shall attain. One day she addressed this fervent prayer to God :

“ I want to profit by this Retreat ; to put my hand to the plough in good earnest. It is for Thee, O my God, that I strive so hard to rid myself of my imperfections. Thou seest the depths of my heart, and Thou knowest that I love Thee. O my God, give me strength to walk with giant strides in the path of perfection.” (Journal of 1847).

She thanks God, somewhere, for having given her a conscience which unceasingly reproaches her with the imperfection of her life, and in an hour of fervor she cries out :

“ Oh, how much I desire to labor for my perfection !” Nor did this desire grow weaker, either with

the years, nor with the stumbling blocks which the weakness of her nature opposed to all her efforts. She concluded her last Retreat, by a generous resolution, which responded to that constant desire of her soul :

“ Ah, I have returned to Thee, O Lord ! Thou wilt have pity on me, and help me to bear thy yoke, that it may become sweet and light to me. I dread the future, I have so often made promises of fidelity ; but I hope, and I shall not be confounded in my hope. With thy help, O my God, and through the firm purpose I have of correcting myself, I shall carry off the victory.” (Journal of 1850).

A little further on, she wrote similar words : “Thou seest, O my God, I have given Thee my heart forever and without reserve. Whatever it may cost me, I shall labor for perfection ; the thought of heaven which is the reward of all the sacrifices of this life encourages me.” (Journal of 1850).

The secret of all her courage was the love of Jesus Christ, the hope of His eternal rewards, the light of faith and the strength which is given by the deliberate and submissive acceptance of the Cross.

There is no evidence that she experienced any of those sensible consolations with which God assists the weakness and sustains the love of certain souls, whom it is His will should be less detached from themselves, and less closely united to His dolorous Passion. No trace of them is found in the Journal. God seemed indeed to make her habitually feel the weight of the

Cross with no other comfort than the light of faith.

“ My crosses,” wrote she, “ which I find so great, are nothing in comparison with the graces which Thou dost give me every day.” (Journal of 1847).

When her heart was filled with that sensible joy which is as the caress of grace, she mentioned it as something noteworthy, and as an exceptional help, vouchsafed to her weakness. In one of those moments, she wrote :

“ I feel a sweet joy and a great calm. I thank Thee, O my God, for having taken pity on me, who have so often offended Thee. I thank Thee, for having given me this day of consolation. Knowing how weak I am, Thou dost help to raise me up.”

She regarded the happiness of religious life, altogether from the point of view of its advantages and its spiritual benefits, of which she had need to convince herself by prayer. One day after her meditation on the Birth of Our Lord, His obedience and His poverty, she wrote : “ That which struck me in those meditations, was the happiness of the religious life. I have asked pardon for my interior and exterior murmurings concerning the privations of every day, as they regard the vow of poverty. I thanked God that He caused me more than others to feel the privations of poverty.” (Journal of 1848).

Perhaps she suffered more, however, from being forced to accept through obedience, and in consideration of the weakness of her stomach, certain dispensa-

tions from the common food. She spoke in these terms of the refusal of Mgr. Prince, at the end of the Retreat to permit her to go back to the same food as the Sisters: "Still another trial; I am obliged to obey, once again, in that particular." (Journal of 1847).

The renunciation of her personal views and opinions, the blind obedience, wherein she found great peace of soul, still continued to be the cause of severe struggles. She admits this on many occasions and felt the need of strengthening herself on this point by a special resolution. The obedience of my God during His whole life and in His Passion encourages me to obey my Superiors and the Rules, blindly, and in all things. I will overcome my repugnances." (Same Retreat).

She was very sensitive to criticisms from her Superiors, confessing her continual fear of being reproved by them. She suffered and was troubled when her director corrected her brusquely; but the considerations of faith and the sentiment of obedience, quickly resumed the upperhand.

"My director, gave me great pain," she wrote one day, "reflecting afterwards, in presence of the Blessed Sacrament that God has given him to me to be my guide, taking His own place in my regard and that he has been divinely chosen to bring me to that perfection which God demands of me. I earnestly prayed that God would enlighten him. For my part, all that I have to do is to obey, and it matters little whether his manner towards me is gentle or severe.



After those reflections, peace was restored to my soul which had been thrown into such agitation by that little trial. ( Journal of 1848 ).

It may be seen that her warfare against self was incessant. Cost what it might, she was eager, through the inspirations of divine grace, to plant everywhere in her soul the victorious standard of the Cross, to subject thereto, all its powers and all its passions, and each effort was cruel and violent. Her repugnances, were continually recurring. Nature only submitted in groanings, and after a fervent appeal to the help of God, and a fresh revival of hope, in that eternal reward, which is after all not so very far distant.

“ Why should we be so much afraid of self-denial ? ” cried she, “ life is so short. One day we shall enjoy the presence of God. ”

When the grace of God impelled her in a more pressing manner to sacrifice, she was not afraid to cut into the very quick of her heart and to force herself to renounce even her most cherished affections. Her Journal reveals one which was particularly painful to her, and of which we here reproduce her own account. It was written in her heart's blood, as it flowed fresh from the wound she had opened with her own hands.

“ Profound meditation . . . What wilt Thou have of me, O Lord ? Still another sacrifice ? And it came into my mind that I was still too much attached to something. I informed Mgr. Prince that it would cost me a great deal to part from something which I was in the

habit of gazing at and kissing. That was the locks of my little children's hair, which I venerated as relics very precious to me. He required me, after twenty five years, to part from them and to put them under a board in a cellar, where I shall be buried, so that they can be put into my coffin after death. Ah, how many tears, known only to my God, that sacrifice cost me ! I must obey him, who has commanded this sacrifice, as a punishment for my too great attachment thereto and the too natural gratification which I took in looking at and kissing them, with so much complacency here on earth, though never to see them again, except in heaven, a thought which made me groan and lament all night long. Not knowing how I should get courage enough to go down into the cellar, I begged Sister Séné, to whom I had confided my trouble, to come with me. In the cellar I regarded the place where I should be buried. I commanded my dear little children to take pity upon their poor mother, and to pray for her, since from the height of heaven they see my miseries, that they may obtain for me, the spirit of sacrifice, to bear the crosses and the trials incident to my state. A thought regarding them which seemed to console me, was that they being already inhabitants of heaven, could be useful to me upon earth. Therefore, on stormy days, I shall have recourse to them ; they shall console and help me in my daily trials. My good little angels, pray for your poor mother, who, indeed, commands you not to forget her before the throne of the Eternal God." ( Journal 1847).

It was by such strong impulses of generosity, that our venerated Foundress, succeeded in drawing nearer to God, giving herself more entirely to Him, and corresponding with His designs, for her perfection.

However, in spite of these continual struggles, her countenance habitually preserved its calm ; rarely did it reveal the sufferings of her heart. 'Through repeated efforts and constant vigilance over herself, she had acquired control of her temper, and of those sallies of impatience by which the vivacity of her temperament at first displayed itself. She always appeared equable, with great amiability, and a readiness to give wise counsel, or effectual consolation.

Nor were her advice and consolation restricted to her religious. Her works of charity, and the frequent relations which she had with others, often made her the recipient of confidences, relating to personal or domestic miseries and difficulties, to which the natural uprightness of her judgment, and the inspirations of faith enabled her to offer the happiest solution. And these solutions were nearly always accepted. "Lately," she said one day, "several people have come to ask me to make peace in their families, and God in His great mercy, has deigned to make use of me, to prevent many terrible sins. "

The reflection which immediately follows, shows to what an extent she distrusted her own judgment, and was anxious to secure, in such cases, the judgment of her Superiors.

"I was anxious to know the will of God, in that matter. I have consulted with others and have been fully instructed how to proceed in future." Such humility must surely have drawn down the blessing of heaven on her zeal and charity.

Her ardent piety was nourished especially by prayer and by the Holy Eucharist, those two deep springs of the interior life. She sometimes took the greatest delight even from her spiritual communions.

"So many consolations in prayer," she said, a little farther on, "it seemed to me that I was in heaven, by reason of the happiness which I experienced in communicating with my God. I have experienced an intoxication which I cannot define, but which must be felt before that state of the soul, which I have sometimes enjoyed in my Communions, can be understood." (Journal of 1848).

But these delights were transitory, and but one of those foretastes which God sometimes permits to His elect, of that ineffable communication of His being which He reserves for the eternal festival. Ordinarily, as to all His friends, God only communicated to her, in prayer or Communion that comfort which is sufficient for their sustenance. It is His will, that Thabor should be but one glorious stage on the way to Calvary. Coldness, dryness, distractions, are the daily bread of its most fervent souls, in their efforts to draw near to God. They are afflicted and humiliated thereby and they say with our holy Foundress :

“ I have made my Spiritual Communion ; I desired very much to communicate sacramentally ; I made haste to ask for that favor, but I think that I well deserve to be deprived of it, in reparation for so many lukewarm Communions.” ( Journal of 1848 ).

“ Our dear Mother, ” relates one of her surviving companions, “ often made aloud, the quarter of an hour’s preparation for the meditation of the next day and with an unction and tenderness that rendered meditation easy and attractive to every one. It may be said that she seized that opportunity, to give to the Community that advice which was poured as aromatic oil into our souls. Those sweet impressions remained engraven upon our hearts, and we meditated upon them. Our Mother expressed herself with great fluency. Her words were marked by good sense and rectitude. She rendered meditation practical and applied it to our actual wants. ”

Each time that the clock struck the hour, she stood up, to recall her morning prayer and to renew her resolutions. She said at the same time the following prayer, which she has bequeathed to us, and which figures to-day in our Book of Customs.

“ At this hour and every hour of the day and night, may the good Jesus be in my heart. Blessed be the moment in which my Saviour was incarnate, died and rose again for the salvation of souls. Hail Mary. ” For more than half a century, at every hour of the day and night, that prayer is murmured by hundreds of voices,



in all our houses. May it obtain for us all, the tender piety of our holy Foundress. In common with all the saints, our venerated Foundress had a high esteem for mortification, which she assiduously practiced. During the first two years, of her religious life, she caused the discipline to be administered to her by the Sister who slept in the room with her. But she said to her, one day :

“ Sister, I thank you for your charity. Hitherto I have been too cowardly to inflict that chastisement upon myself, but now I have become accustomed to it; the click, of that weapon, does not frighten me any more and I can use it myself. ”

And she proved, in fact, under many circumstances, that she had become familiar with its use. The resolutions of her Retreat often touched upon the goodness, sweetness and humility, which she should show to her Sisters, and the charity with which she should bear with their defects. She interested herself actively in their spiritual progress. At the conclusion of a meditation on the interior life, she said :

“ I am always more occupied with the temporal than with the spiritual ; I took the resolution of making it my task, to preserve recollection and for the future to interest myself more in the spiritual than in the temporal, both as regards myself and others. ” (Journal of 1848).

She had a scrupulous fear of disedifying them by her faults and imperfections, or by failing to give them a sufficiently good example. That sentiment recurs, very

often in her writings: "What shall I do at the present time?" she cried, one day. "I, a worm of the earth, dust and ashes, at the head of a nascent Community and so little capable of governing, where so much virtue and such good example are required. Tell me, O my God, what Thou desirest of me, for Thy servant heareth." (Journal of 1846).

"Lord, Thou seest the depths of my heart," she wrote in the following year, "take pity upon me. Give me the grace to labor with new courage at the correction of my faults, which give bad example to my Sisters." (Journal of 1847).

We know with what courage and fidelity she applied herself to that work, and with what success. This is evidenced by the innumerable testimonies of her companions, which corroborate the confessions of those confidential writings. But besides example, that first and most fruitful of lessons, she brought to the direction of the Sisters, and the spiritual government of her Community, all the resources of an ardent zeal and a persevering energy, tempered by prudence and regulated by gentleness and patience.

Her extreme kindness and great delicacy made her avoid every word which might hurt the feelings of those, to whom she had to give orders, admonition or reproof. She took definite resolutions upon that head:

"I weigh every order that I have to give," she said, "desiring to do to others as I would be done by,

I have asked pardon of our good God, for all that I may have made my Sisters suffer, before deciding upon anything."

And a little farther on, she made that humble avowal :

"I remarked that to-day, more than ever, I have failed in prudence in my words, and wisdom in my actions. I will ask Our Lady of the Seven Dolours every day in the year for those two virtues." (Journal of 1849.)

That sincerity and uprightness of intention, either with regard to herself or others, could not fail to obtain from God, the necessary qualifications for successful direction. A fact which her religious were not slow to recognize and to which they paid due homage.

"There was nothing small about her," said one of her first companions.

"She was truly maternal, but she had no cowardly timidity. When it was necessary to reprove any one, she did so, frankly and directly."

With such sentiments and such dispositions, she must necessarily attach primary importance, to the training of novices. Her solicitude and affection led her by instinct, towards that cradle of her infant community's hopes.

She perfectly understood that on a good novitiate depends the formation of the spirit, and of the religious, virtues that should animate and fructify one's entire life. In the direction of her novices, she was inspired by those words of Mgr. Bourget, showing that the life of

virgins consecrated to God, is a perpetual novitiate, for their heavenly life of eternal glory.

“ Your Communities, ” wrote the Bishop, “ are properly speaking, the novitiates, for that Community of Virgins, with which Jesus Christ loves to surround himself in heaven. In the different novitiates of earth, is learned that virginal canticle, which shall be sung eternally in Paradise. And it is only when the heart and the lips are judged sufficiently pure for that singing, that the virgins in exile shall be called to their true country, the community of communities. But there is something, Our Very Dear Daughters, that should make us tremble. For Alas, if there should be some amongst you, who after having made a long and painful novitiate on earth, should not be judged worthy to make profession in the holy and happy Community of Heaven. ” (1)

Mother Gamelin had a lively consciousness of the responsibility that rested upon her in the direction of the novices. Since the official nomination of their Mistress on the 30th March, 1844, in addition to the weekly instructions, given by Mgr. Prince and the daily exercises presided over by their Mistress, our venerated Mother herself addressed frequent exhortations to them on the religious virtues and especially upon those which should be practiced by the Sisters of our Institute, humility, simplicity, charity. She often made a meditation to them aloud, following the method of St. Ignatius, of

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(1) Pastoral letter of December 8th, 1850.

which she had rendered herself mistress. She gave them much valuable advice, on the care of the sick and the infirm, the visiting of the poor and the other Community works ; applying herself to the development in them of an energy and devotedness, that would reach the height of any sacrifice.

But she knew how to impart to these lessons so much of her own goodness and tenderness, as to lend them an irresistible attraction.

“ Like the best of mothers, ” said one of them, “ she lavished on her young Sisters, the most tender and affectionate care. Therefore, how much we loved that good Mother ! She did not however, spare us tests of virtue, nor acts of renunciation ; but she knew too well what such things cost, not to share them with us. In all circumstances, she was seen to weep or rejoice with us. ”

To the postulants in particular, she showed a delicate and affectionate kindness, displaying much ingenuity in distracting and consoling them, when she saw them overcome by loneliness, the sorrow caused by their departure from their families, and the memory of a painful separation. But her goodness and tenderness, never enfeebled that firmness necessary to the training of souls called to a life of renunciation and self-sacrifice, she was never sparing of penances, when she believed them useful for their correction or spiritual advancement.



To give here a few examples: One day she met a novice rushing precipitately down the stairs. She accosted her gently, and said: "My little daughter, come to my room this evening and I will give you something." The young Sister was much pleased, supposing that she was going to be rewarded for her ardor in work, or her enthusiasm for the exercises. She wondered within herself, what would be given to her! Perhaps a picture of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, or of St. Vincent de Paul, which she should keep sacredly all her life, in memory of that good Mother. At length came the anxiously expected moment. After the night prayer, the novice knocked gently at the Superior's door. "My child," said the Mother, "I am going to give you something. I would like to give you a present of it, for your personal use, but I often make use of it myself. Here is my discipline, my dear child, you will give yourself seven good strokes with it, this evening, and the same number to-morrow morning, before bringing it back to me. That exercise will teach you to moderate your pace upon the stairs. You will reach your destination, a few seconds later, but your bearing, will be more like that of a religious, and Our Lord, will love you better."

The novice understood the lesson; she was not tempted to keep that present all her life, but she retained the memory thereof and corrected herself once for all of her undue precipitation.

Another time, in the novitiate, she was discoursing on spiritual subject. Her children surrounded her and,

as of old, the disciples of Emmaus, they felt their hearts burn within them, in the flame of their Mother's holy aspirations and ardent charity. In the midst of these sweet and pious enjoyments, the bell rang for prayers and instantly Mother Gamelin rose to her feet.

"Oh, do stay with us," her listeners begged. "But," answered the Mother, "the meditation bell has rung". "Oh, that is nothing," quickly interposed one of the most impetuous, "oh, please do stay Mother." "Very well, I will stay but as I do not wish to make you fail in a duty to Our Lord, you, Sister Alexis, will make the meditation aloud." And for the next half hour, to her great confusion, the poor child was obliged, to perform that penance, very well understanding the lesson and how necessary it is to obey at the sound of the bell, and to know how to leave God for God.

Many anecdotes of the same nature might be recited here, which would give a just idea of the direction of our saintly Mother, who was goodness, tenderness and strictness combined, who exacted obedience from every one, while making them love her, and inspired respect for her authority, without lessening affection for herself. They felt, moreover, a genuine pleasure in obliging her, she knew so well how to accept and appreciate a favor.

"I received your donation," she wrote to a lady, who had sent her a package of old clothes. "It has dressed three of our old women. Come and see how nice, and how rejuvenated they look, in their new costumes."

“ When we grow old, ” she said one day, to Mr. Jean Bruneau, “ we become chilly. I went to see some of our good, old women, this evening, and I found that several of them were very cold. ”

The excellent man took the hint and next day, he sent over some dozens of warm blankets. Her kindness to the sick Sisters, was extreme.

She, whose heart, was so easily moved by any kind of suffering, could not remain indifferent to that of her dear daughters, breaking down under the weight of fatigue and of their unremitting devotedness. Twice a day she visited them in the infirmary, inquiring after their health and giving them herself whatever care their state demanded. At times, when the poverty of the house, did not enable her to procure for them, such little delicacies as the sick often crave, she was frequently seen setting out with a basket upon her arm, to beg fruit or some other dainty, for the sake of her dear sick.

But it was especially at the time of the Irish immigration, of which mention will be made in another chapter, when twenty-seven of her Sisters were stricken with typhus, that her solicitude knew no bounds. The survivors of that melancholy period, preserve the sweetest memories of her delicate attentions, which the most tender mother could not surpassed. She would have lightened the arduous labors, imposed by the multiplicity of works, on her first companions, at least, securing for them food sufficient to repair their strength, ex-

hausted by such rude labor. How many times, were her eyes seen to fill with tears, when she saw served out to appease their hunger, a meagre pittance, which many poor persons would reject. She exerted her ingenuity, in procuring for them some alleviation of these hardships.

On Sunday, she regularly took charge of the wards, the parlor, and the kitchen. She had a particular partiality for the last mentioned office, because it permitted her to contrive little surprises, and certain delicate attentions for her dear daughters. Sometimes, the day previous, she wrote to a relative or friend, asking her to send her some eggs, tea or coffee, so that she could provide a little treat. Our mothers generously accepted the rigors of poverty. They knew that holiness demands the mortification of the senses ; and they bore in mind, that thought of St. Teresa, who said, speaking of the saints :

“ It happens to them as to children who are working in their father's garden ; they are not paid by the day like others, but they receive their reward all at once. ”

“ They also know that the religious life is summed up in those words of the Imitation : ” “ No one shall reach the heavenly Kingdom without having suffered valiantly. In the Cross is the strength of the soul, in the Cross, joy of mind, the consummation of virtue, the perfection of holiness. ”

It is at the cost of such renunciation, that the disciple after having left all to follow in the foot-steps of Jesus, in the narrow way of the Counsels, obtains the choicest graces, that spiritual liberty and interior peace, which the Master has promised, as the hundredfold, for those wordly goods that have been given up to follow Him.

Mgr. Bourget, earnestly endeavored to develop in our first Sisters, that spirit of sacrifice and love for the Cross. He insisted upon these points in his oral or written instructions. Nor did he ever cease his efforts to preserve that spirit in our Community, as is shown by this letter, from Rome, which was written, on one occasion, from Rome, to our Sisters, some years after the death of our venerated Foundress.

That martyrdom of the religious life, is with you in your daily struggles, and consequently it is something perfectly familiar, and continually practised in your holy houses. For on entering there, the Cross is accepted and never laid down until death. All your life long, you must walk after Jesus, who is truly the blood stained Spouse, of all Virgins. The road by which He leads them is strewn from one end to the other, with briars and thorns, and ends only in Calvary.

God hides Himself in the depths of souls that are thus tried, leaving them a prey to all sorts of troubles of the mind and the most cruel sufferings, interior and exterior. They are the thick clouds that obscure the path to heaven, so that knowing not where they are, souls believe themselves lost. And then there is only painful



disgust with spiritual exercises, distressing dryness in prayer, phantoms in the imagination and intolerable weariness in the troubles of life. That is, however, merely an abridged picture of your sufferings, your trials and your combats. Your every day experience, makes it known to you with far greater detail.

Religious life is, then, a veritable martyrdom, and is so described by St. Bernard. It may even be compared to that hogshhead of boiling oil, into which was plunged the beloved disciple, and "whence he emerged," says St. Jerome, "stronger and better, than before he was put in there." It was after that generous combat for the faith, that he received upon the Island of Patmos, those admirable revelations, which he left to the Church in the Book of Apocalypse. And is it not after many and terrible trials, that religious souls, find themselves singularly enlightened in the ways of God. And why? It is because they have been purified, by dying to themselves and living only for God."

In the preceding paragraph, may be found a summary of our venerated Mother's seven years of religious life. Troubles of the mind, darkness, dryness, fear, desolation, not one of these interior trials were wanting to her. God would spare her none of them, because He wanted to raise her to a high degree of sanctity.

It is by suffering that He forms chosen souls, as the sculptor, by the strokes of his chisel, upon the unhewn marble under his hand, makes the perfect statue. There is no doubt, that Mother Gamelin must inevit-

ably have been aware of the success with which God crowned the numerous works she undertook for His glory; just as the laborer, bending over the furrow, has a hopeful perspective of the abundant fruits, which shall be given to his harvest. But God does not always permit His saints, to enjoy the fruition of the good they have done here below. It is not His will that His faithful servants should experience the joy and consolation afforded by the happy development of their undertakings, nor the consciousness of the good which they have thereby accomplished; as a general thing they only know the bitterness of contradiction, the remuneration, the humiliations, the doubts and the anguish of spirit, which have continually weighed them down.

In reading the autographic Journal of her annual Retreats, from 1846-1851, which are reproduced, in their entirety in the appendix to this volume and from which we have given such copious extracts, these interior troubles may be matter of astonishment to some, who may be disposed to treat as exaggerated, or chimerical, those pains and anxieties of conscience, which caused her to fear even the shadow of sin, tormenting her heart and filling her with fear and anguish. But such things will be in no way surprising to religious souls, who know the trials and the difficulties of the interior life and the rude and persevering efforts, that are demanded by christian perfection.

The intimate pages, which reveal to us the life and the struggles of our venerated Mother, are a price-

less possession for her religious family. For they will teach its members, that in the service of the heavenly Spouse, they must often overcome, humble and forget self. They may also prove, perhaps, an encouragement to good, and a salutary example to souls living in the world. Seeing how humble was the opinion of herself, entertained by the great servant of God, who had left all things to follow Jesus, and how much, despite her generous sacrifices, she dreaded the last judgment, they may understand that the path to heaven is not flower strewn, but overgrown with thorns and briars, and that to be perfect, one must according to the teaching of the Divine Master, deny oneself, take up the Cross, and follow Him to Calvary.

## CHAPTER XII

1847—1848

IRISH IMMIGRATION AND THE TYPHUS.—THE SHEDS AT POINT ST. CHARLES.—THE IRISH ORPHANS AND THE HOSPICE ST. JEROME EMILIANUS.

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WE must now touch upon an epoch, too sadly celebrated in the history of our city. Our Community had the happiness of playing a consoling part in that mournful drama, and one which the passage of years can never cause to be forgotten.

In 1847, Ireland was decimated by the twofold scourge of typhus fever and famine. Her unfortunate inhabitants died by the thousands. Deserted houses, were found to be inhabited only by decomposed and putrified corpses. Many attempted to fly and died along the roads where their corpses became the prey of wild animals. In the excess of their misery, a great many Irish people, hoped to find in America, a second country where with the means of existence they should enjoy the free exercise of their religion. England favored that immigration to Canada.

A large number of vessels were chartered into which rushed pell-mell, hundreds of these unfortunates, weakened by misery or even secretly attacked by the disease, in the hope of finding new life there. But Alas ! the fever soon burst forth in the midst of those vessels which were transformed into hospitals. Death spread its ravages amongst them, separating husband from wife and mother from child. The groans of the dying, to whom there was none to bring help, the lamentations of mothers, the cries of children, who had been made orphans upon the wide expanse of ocean, formed a sorrowful concert. From time to time, a body was thrown into the sea, floated for some instants on the surface and disappeared forever in the vast abyss of the waters.

In setting foot on Canadian soil, after that dismal voyage, these unfortunates, found themselves face to face, with death which at last put an end to their misery, or by the disease, which struck the small number of those whom it had hitherto spared.

But they were met at the same time, by the charity of the religious, which cared for and brought relief to their bodies, and by the zeal and piety of the priests who consoled their souls, and prepared them to return to God.

The Quarantine Station, down the river from Quebec, and the Marine Hospital of that city, were thronged with the sick. (1) In Montreal, the Government caused to be erected on the river banks, at Point St. Charles, three sheds, or provisory hospitals, from 100, to 150 feet, in length, and from 40 to 50 feet in width. These soon proved, however, insufficient for the increasing number of the sick, who were constantly being brought, on incoming vessels. The number of these unfortunates, who were landed at Point St. Charles was estimated at from 11 to 12,000. Eleven sheds were soon filled with the sick, and the whole city was thrown into consternation. The rich fled to the country, and those who remained, took numberless precautions, for escaping the contagion. However, the warmest sympathy was shown towards the hapless Irish, and abundant help was given in the shape of linen, clothing and food.

The Gray Nuns, was the first religious Community called to their aid. At the end of a few weeks, thirty of their number had been attacked by the disease, and

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(1) The number of Irish emigrants who arrived during the summer of 1847, is placed at upward of 25,000.



seven went to receive in heaven the reward of their generous devotedness. It was necessary to replace them, by having recourse to another Community.

Mgr. Bourget, then, thought of our Sisters, and came himself to the Asylum, to make appeal to their devotion. That was on the 24th of June. He assembled the Community, which comprised at that period, nineteen professed, nineteen novices, and fourteen postulants. He laid before them the pitiable condition of the sick and asked if any amongst them were willing to sacrifice themselves and risk their lives, in caring for those unfortunates. As he asked that question, all rose and with one voice, answered altogether, "I am ready."

The next morning, at half past seven, after having been fortified by Holy Communion and the blessing of their Bishop, twelve of those brave women, chosen by their Superior, got into carriages and were driven to the sheds of Point St. Charles, where a sad spectacle awaited them.

From hundreds of the sick, couched upon straw, in the wrestlings of their agony came forth dolorous cries; little children, who were still clasped in the arms of mothers who had died during the night, wept and cried; corpses lying here and there, already exhaled the odor of death; women who were scarcely able to drag themselves about, sought in that frightful chaos, for a husband or child of whose fate they were ignorant. Such was the dismal picture presented by that field of suffering.

The Sisters set to work at once, causing the dead

to be removed, and lavishing their care upon the sick. There were none to assist them in this laborious ministry, except a few convalescents, who gave them some help beside the dying.

The religious of the Hôtel-Dieu, by permission of the Bishop, left their cloister and for some days, shared with our Sisters, those offices of charity. In the midst of these devoted infirmarians, were to be found Mgr. Bourget himself, several of the Canons and priests of the bishopric, Sulpicians, Jesuits, and secular priests, who worked night and day amongst the sick; they heard their confessions, administered the last Sacraments, while encouraging and consoling them. Fifty or sixty died every day, and their bodies while awaiting burial, were placed in an immense charnel house, erected upon the river banks.

At length, thanks to the erection of new sheds, it was possible to classify them. Men, women and children, as well as the convalescents, were separated and distributed amongst the different sections. Mgr. Bourget suggested, that Mother Gamelin should undertake the care of the orphans, who, to the number of more than six hundred, occupied two of the provisory hospitals. Deeply touched, by the fate of these forsaken children, she accepted the proposal with joy. She immediately secured the use of Mrs. Nolan's house, on St. Catherine St., and sent two Sisters, thither, to receive little boys. The house was not furnished, but twenty bundles of straw were procured and spread upon the floor, as sleeping places for those poor, little ones, scarcely

covered with miserable rags. The girls were confided to the religious of the Good Shepherd, until a larger house could be found, in which to gather them together.

The transportation of these poor orphans was most touching. Two Sisters were seated in each carriage, holding on their knees, the young children, some of whom were only a few days old. Mgr. Bourget himself, occupied the first carriage, being anxious to encourage, by his example, the charitable interest which he desired to excite in favor of these poor creatures, so deserving of compassion. In a letter, written at a somewhat later period, which contained the outpourings of his great heart, he spoke of the sweet, though agonizing memories which he had retained of that eventful period.

“ We must tell you,” he wrote, “ that one of the sweetest moments of our life, was that in which, at the head of a numerous family of orphans, we traversed the city streets bringing them to the Refuges, which had been prepared for them.”

“ The spectacle of hundreds of children, famishing with hunger, covered with rags and in a danger of succumbing to the attacks of that terrible disease, which had deprived them of their parents, was so poignant that it can never be forgotten.” (1)

Our Sisters continued to care for the sick at Point St. Charles, until the beginning of October. For nearly

three months, the religious of the Congregation de Notre Dame, had had the kindness to have them driven to the sheds in great vehicles which they had hired for the purpose. And the Gray Nuns, gave them their dinner, in their house at Point St. Charles.

The Annual Retreat, in the month of July, was made by those Sisters who were employed in that ministry, in the very midst of the sick, and certainly, St. Vincent de Paul, himself, the author of their Rule would have found nothing more to say.

Amongst those taking part in that Retreat, were seven novices, soon to be admitted to profession. (1) Where better than in those scenes of charity and devotion, could they meditate on the manner of life, and the duties of a Sister of Charity. They could with the fullest confidence pronounce the vows of religion; their vocation had been tested, they were already in practice, true Sisters of Charity.

On the very morning of their profession, after having embraced their relatives, they returned at the usual hour to the sheds, to resume there, their devoted ministry.

Twenty-seven of our Sisters, were stricken with the plague, nine of that number received the last Sacraments and three died. Sister Mary of the Assumption, in the world, Catherine Brady, was the first victim. She had been scarcely a year professed and was only twenty-four years of age. Her death gave the first fruits of our


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(1) Sisters Jean Baptiste, Brigitte, Wilson, Augustine, Philomene, Patrice and Praxede of the Providence.

Community to heaven since she was the first to die. It was a great happiness for our Community, and a pledge of the blessing of God on our Institute, that the Divine Master should have called her to himself, in the exercise of one of the purest acts of christian charity. Four days later, also during the Octave of the Assumption, and like the first, a postulant, Sister Angele Blouin, expired after having had the happiness of pronouncing her vows. She was soon followed by another novice, Sister Antoine, in the world, Olympe Guy, who had the same happiness before departing this life. She had been eighteen months in the Community.

In view of the sickness and death which struck down these brave infirmarians, Mgr. Bourget was much concerned by the danger that threatened our young Institute. He assembled all the Sisters in the oratory, and in the name of all the professed religious, made aloud, a vow to burn seven tapers every Friday, in perpetuity, before the statue of Our Lady of Seven Dolors, for the preservation of our Institute, which was threatened with destruction by the death, or dangerous illness of so many religious who had been attacked by typhus. The gentle Virgin heard that prayer; the sick Sisters were restored to health and after a longer or shorter convalescence were enabled to resume their work.

It was on the 1st of October, that the orphans, temporarily installed in Mrs. Nolan's house were able to take possession of the former Convent of the Good Shepherd, situated on Beaudry St., then Black Horse St. The new Hospice, was placed under the invocation of





St. Jerome Emilianus. It was large enough to receive, besides, in a separate department, the orphans whom the religious of the Good Shepherd had temporarily accepted.

Mother Elizabeth was the first Superior of the new refuge, having as her companions, Sisters Brigitte and Catherine. An Irish priest, Father Fitzhenry was charged with the religious instruction of all those children, but he was unable to continue that ministry very long, and was soon replaced by Father Fabre, who was, then, a student pursuing his theological studies at the Bishop's palace. The young ecclesiastic, found, therein, an interesting field for his zeal. He applied himself with the greatest devotion to that ministry, and a few months later, he had the consolation of presenting sixty of those children for First Communion and Confirmation.

From the 11th of July, Mother Gamelin received six hundred and fifty orphans, at the Hospice of St. Jerome Emilianus. Of that number, three hundred and thirty-two died, and one hundred and eighty-eight, were placed out or adopted. In the month of March, one hundred and thirty remained, in addition to ninety-nine who had stayed in the sheds at Point St. Charles. At that time the Hospice was entirely dependent on charitable resources, for the government had just withdrawn the modest allowance, which it had temporarily granted.

Mgr. Bourget touched by the situation and the future of these children, made a warm appeal to his diocesans,



Mgr. EDOUARD CHARLES FABRE,  
third Bishop, and first Archbishop of Montreal



in their favor, in a pastoral letter, from which the following extracts are taken :

“Full of the great confidence, inspired by your past charity, we now address ourselves to your wonted kindness, and we beg of you to let its effects be felt by these poor orphans, who are so dear to our hearts.

“ Yes, our very dear Brethren, receive them, without stopping in any way to consider that according to the flesh, they are of an origin alien to our own, for united, as they are through Jesus Christ by faith, they make with us, but one and the same people.

“ Receive them, without considering either, that they may be a burden to you ; for you know very well that charity to be meritorious, should be practised gratuitously, and for the love of Jesus Christ. For the rest, nothing is lost with God, and everything rewarded a hundredfold in this life, with the promise of life eternal in the next. Philemon is a striking proof of this assertion, for, having pardoned Onesime, for whom the great Apostle had poured forth all the richness of his eloquence, and opening to him, the bowels of his charity, he had the happiness of becoming a faithful companion of St. Paul, a Bishop inflamed with zeal, and a glorious martyr of Jesus Christ.”

“ It will be the same with you all ; and it may be hoped that in adopting these poor children, we shall make them our companions in faith, good priests, fervent religious, excellent citizens, who brought up in our midst, shall make common cause with us.”

After having specially addressed himself to the clergy, to the seminary, and to the religious communities of men and women, the holy Bishop made an appeal to the laity :

“ Receive, pious and charitable laymen, and adopt these tender children with that cordial joy which is the characteristic of true charity. Have for them all the tenderness that you would wish to see in those who might be called upon to receive your own children, if they had the misfortune of losing you, and if relegated to a strange land, without family or friends, they were reduced to such miserable straits. Is not this the time, if ever, to put in practice these touching words of Our Lord :

“ As you would, that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner. (St. Luke, chp. VI, 31.)

Animated with these sentiments, you will welcome these children, you will bring them up carefully, correct them with gentleness and love them with tenderness. Oh, how amiable and interesting you will find these children ! Oh, if you only knew how deeply they feel the kindness that is shown them, how grateful they are to those who care for them : with what faith do they pray to the Father of Mercies for those who assist them ; with what transports of joy, they embrace each other, in meeting with those whom they had thought dead ; how deep are their feelings when it is necessary to separate them from those whom they may never see again ; how they weep in recalling the mem-



ory of their dear parents, or of those charitable persons, who sacrificed their lives, to relieve their misfortunes. — With what emotion they watch the countenances of those who come to see them with a view to adoption, in the hope of being fortunate enough to be chosen, — how firm and decided they are, when it has been necessary to reject the tempting offers of those whom they know to be the enemies of their faith ; how sincere and abundant the tears which they shed when it is question of bidding farewell to those tender mothers whom religion has prepared for them in their misfortunes.” (1)

It was impossible to resist those words, dictated by the most ardent charity. Colleges, convents, lay people, all hastened to respond. Out of two hundred and twenty-nine children who remained to be placed out, one hundred and sixty-nine were adopted by the Catholic institutions and families of the diocese, and sixty remained, as our Sisters' share. These latter were distributed amongst our different houses, or apprenticed that they might learn a trade and be able to gain an honest livelihood. It may be affirmed that the greater number of these children, proved worthy of the devotedness and the care they had received. That wish of Mgr. Bourget, was realized :

“ In adopting these poor children, they will become our companions in faith, good priests, fervent religious, excellent citizens.” (2)

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(1) Pastoral Letter of March 1848.


(2) The same Pastoral Letter.

Several became priests and were, or are still, an honor to the sacerdotal body ; others went to swell the ranks of our religious communities of women, a still greater number gave an example in the world, of inviolable attachment to their faith, which neither sufferings nor persecution could shake. (1)

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(1) The number of Irish emigrants, who died of typhus in the sheds at Point St. Charles, is estimated at 6000. To perpetuate the memory of that mournful event, an enormous block of stone, was placed upon the land which received the mortal remains of those unfortunates, with the following inscription :

“ To preserve from profanation  
the remains of 6000 emigrants  
who died of typhus  
in 1847—1848  
this stone has been erected  
by the workmen of Messrs, Peto, Brassey and Bates,  
employed in the construction of the  
Victoria bridge,  
A.D. 1859.”



## CHAPTER XIII

1848—1849

PILGRIMAGE TO OUR LADY OF BONSECOURS (GOOD HELP).—  
THE WORK OF THE DAUGHTERS OF ST. BLANDINE.—ST. JAMES'  
SCHOOL.— FOUNDATION OF THE MISSION OF ST. ELIZABETH.—  
OUR DAY SCHOOLS AND BOARDING SCHOOLS.— THE EXERCISES  
OF THE CARNIVAL SANCTIFIED.— THE CHOLERA AND THE HOS-  
PITAL OF ST. CAMILLE.— DEATH OF SISTER JEAN DE DIEU AND  
OF SISTER AUGUSTINE.— THE THIRD ORDER OF SERVITES OF  
MARY.— ROSE GRANDPRÉ.

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AFTER having taken an important part in the care given to the hapless victims of the typhus, the Community was naturally associated with the solemn thanksgiving that Mgr. Bourget demanded from all the members of his flock, for the cessation of the plague. To obtain the cessation of that terrible disease and for the protection of his people against its ravages, he had made a vow to the Blessed Virgin, to reestablish in the shrine of Bonsecours, the pilgrimage and the fervor of devotion, by which it had formerly been distinguished, and which had almost entirely ceased, through an effect of general indifference. He, himself, in the month of May, 1847, accompanied by an immense multitude of the faithful, had placed in the Church of Bonsecours, a statue in gilt bronze, which he had caused to be blessed

in the Church of Our Lady of Victories, in Paris, to replace the ancient statue of wood, given by the Venerable Mother Bourgeoys, and which had disappeared by a sacrilegious theft during the winter of 1831. (1) He also caused a picture to be hung there, representing the Blessed Virgin arresting the plague at the city's gate.

The first day of May in the following year, he himself inaugurated, accompanied by a great number of his priests, a series of solemn pilgrimages, which pious movement has continued even to our own day. (2) Each Community and each confraternity had its own. Mother Gamelin went thither in her turn, with all her family. The old men, the old women, the orphans of the Asylum, those of the Hospice St. Jerome, the Ladies of Charity, the religious, proceeded in procession with

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(1) That statuette, of brown wood, about seven inches high and of remarkable workmanship, had been presented to Mother Bourgeoys, during one of her voyages to France, by the Messrs, Le Prêtre, Seigneurs of Fleury, in the castle where it had been honored by a particular veneration, for more than a century. They had given it to the Foundress of the Congregation, with the pious design of promoting devotion to the Mother of God in the city consecrated to her. In 1754, the edifice was entirely destroyed by fire, but the statue was found intact in the flames, a preservation which was regarded as miraculous, and added to the reverence with which it was already regarded.

(2) His successors have faithfully preserved the custom, and every year on the last day of April, the Archbishop of Montreal, with the clergy of his episcopal city, solemnly opens the month of Mary in that venerable sanctuary.

their banner at the head, to that hallowed Church, singing hymns or reciting the Rosary aloud, as they walked. On that occasion, our venerated Mother offered as a gift at the shrine, a handsome scapular of red velvet embroidered in gold, which long adorned the statue of the Virgin.

During the period of calm that followed the days of tribulation, our indefatigable Foundress, planned new, charitable undertakings. One class of persons that specially excited her interest, was that of servants out of place, who being without shelter or protection, were exposed to discouragement and to the thousand dangers of isolation, in the heart of a great city. Our good Mother, at first, opened a ward to receive them, and shortly afterwards formed them into an association, under the patronage of St. Blandine. They were subject to a little rule, which forbade all luxury in their dress, and even caused the adoption of a costume, suitable to their state. They were trained to domestic work and in the culinary art ; they were exhorted to bear patiently the trials incident to their state, and to fulfil, devotedly and conscientiously, the duties of their position. These girls found it very easy to get good places. When they came out of service, they were received by the association, until they could be placed again. During the years that it existed, that work did a great deal of good. Those servants were sought after by the wealthier families, to whom they almost always gave satisfaction. Mother Gamelin displayed the most affectionate interest in them and they, on their part, showed her in return the greatest confidence and affection.



St. James' School was another work which Mother Gamelin undertook about that period, by request of Mgr. Bourget. That free school founded in 1827, by Mgr. Lartigue, for the poor children of that quarter, was held in a building occupied in part by the printing presses, of the *Mélanges Religieux*.

It had been in charge, of lay teachers, under the direction of the priests of the Bishop's house. Our Community, is still in charge of it, under the control of the Catholic School Commissioners of the city.

In the month of July, our venerated Mother set out, in company with Sister Caron, (1) to the pretty village of St. Elizabeth in the county of Joliette, to make arrangements with Father Quevillon, the pastor, for the foundation there, of a Convent. That house was to unite, the elementary instruction of girls, with hospitality to old people and orphans, and the visiting of the poor and sick.

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(1) Mother Caron, one of the six first companions of our Foundress, succeeded her as Superior General. Gifted, with splendid qualities of mind and heart, she was esteemed for her religious virtues, particularly her great charity to the poor. She loved them tenderly, the sight of any one in distress moved her to tears. "I do not see," she used to say, "how any one can love God, without loving the poor." The perfect model of a true Sister of Charity, she was well worthy to succeed our saintly Mother.

She died on the 13th August, 1888, at the age, of eighty years. Some days after her death, Bishop de Goebriand of Burlington, wrote to the Community. "Mother Caron, was certainly one of the most amiable and most beloved persons, whom I have ever known, precisely because she forgot herself to oblige and to serve others."

Sister Caron was also named Superior of the new foundation and went thither on the 15th of the following August, with Sister of the Immaculate Conception and Sister François de Sales, and an orphan from the Asylum, to take possession of the temporary building, which the parish priest had placed at their disposal in the neighborhood of the Church, until the Convent which was being constructed should be ready to receive them.

They began the work by receiving six old people and five orphans. The School Commissioners of the parish, because of some difficulties which had arisen between them and the pastor, at first refused to award the governmental allowance to the Sisters. A few of the parishioners, even wanted to support the secular schools in the village. But the Sisters knew how to conciliate the confidence and good will of the population, and the opposition only lasted a few weeks.

On the very evening of their arrival, Sister of the Immaculate Conception went to watch beside a dying person, in one of the families that had been most hostile to the religious schools. Her charity and piety won the hearts of the parents, and the very next morning, the children were inscribed as pupils of the Convent. The Sisters soon had all those of the village under their care.

In the interval, the work upon the construction of the Convent proceeded rapidly. On the 7th November, the bell was blessed at the parish Church, and on the

12th of the same month, Mgr. Prince came to bless the Convent and to celebrate the first Mass in the humble oratory.

Mother Gamelin went thither for the occasion, and spent some days with her daughters. She took advantage of her stay there to convene a general assembly of the women of the parish, and to form an Association of Ladies of Charity, of which the first officers were Madame Gonzague Gadoury, Madame Olivier Drolet and Madame Maurice Beaulieu.

Everything began then under the happiest auspices, and Mother Gamelin left the new mission, full of hope and confidence for the future, after having strengthened the hearts of her daughters by pious exhortations.

"Our good Mother left us," say the local Annals, "after having recommended to us great love of the poor and devotion to St. Elizabeth of Hungary, patroness of our mission."

The parishioners were not long in discovering that the Sisters devoted themselves without reserve to their children and to the poor. At the beginning of the following year, the school numbered sixty-five boarders besides a great many day scholars. The moderate terms for board permitted most of the families in the village, to procure, for their children the advantages offered by the new house, from the standpoints both of education and of piety. The teachers on their part, could congratulate themselves on the good dispositions of their pupils.

The boarding school of St. Elizabeth, like all those which our Community opened later, in other localities, placed elementary instruction, within the reach of many families, whose means would not have permitted them access to establishments where the terms were higher. Our curriculum of studies was in accordance with the requirements of children of humble condition, to whom there would be no question, of imparting anything more than the elements of religion, some history, geography, a knowledge of French, and of Arithmetic, which would enable them to speak and write correctly and to keep the ordinary household accounts. That course of studies prepared them to receive the diploma of teacher for the elementary and model schools which many of our pupils obtain every year.

Our boarding schools have been real nurseries of novices for the religious houses, and especially our own community. There are formed by a pious and studious youth, a great number of our Sisters. That early education, developed in them those solid virtues, which are the best dowry for those who aspire to the perfect life and of which St. Jane de Chantal had heard when she made that recommendation to those of her daughters, whom she sent to her foundations :

“ Do not forget that silver girls rarely make golden religious.(1)’’

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(1) The allusion is more pointed in French where silver and money are the same word, *argent*. So that it would be literally monied girls, etc.

In less than six years, that single boarding school of St. Elizabeth, had given fourteen subjects to our Institute. In 1854, Mgr. Joseph Larocque, then our ecclesiastical Superior, wishing to render public testimony to the number and value of those religious vocations, proceeded himself to St. Elizabeth, to receive the vows of three novices from that parish. Their religious profession was made solemnly, at the parish Church, in presence of a great number of the faithful.

Mother Gamelin, was pleased to attribute the success of this foundation, to the protection of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors. We have already seen how tender was her devotion to the Passion of Our Lord and to the Sorrows of His Holy Mother. She never grew weary of inculcating it in her companions and novices.

“ Let us willingly remain at the foot of the Cross, with Our Mother of Sorrows,” she often said, “ that is our place. Nor, need you seek for the rest, any other devotions or spiritual enjoyments. Be assured, that if during our life, we keep ourselves upon Calvary, the Blood of Jesus will slake our thirst; and wholly intoxicated with that Precious Blood, we shall present ourselves without fear, before the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge. Let us not leave Calvary, except to go up to heaven.”

Therefore the institution of an altogether new exercise of these devotions, in her house, filled her soul with a holy joy. It was with such sentiments that she welcomed the inauguration, that took place in our Chap-



el, " of the Carnival Sanctified, " in honor of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours. It had for its object, to repair the sins which were committed, during the worldly festivities, of that time of the year, and it was made during the thirty days, preceding Ash Wednesday. It consisted of some prayers to the Mother of Sorrows, which were recited after the Community Mass, and followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

In that same year, the plague, which in the years, 1832 and 1834 had spread terror and death amongst our population, again threatened the city. The cholera after having made fearful ravages in the Old World, invaded America. Consternation was soon very general. As early as the month of April, the epidemic had claimed several victims in Montreal.

Those who fled from the town, often brought with them into the country, the germ of contagion, which fear tended to propagate.

Upon the appearance, of the epidemic, Mother Gamelin immediately went to beg from Mgr. Bourget, the favor for herself, of taking care of the sick ; but he refused to acquiesce, in a demand, which imperilled a life so precious to the Community. The very night after, a man knocked at the door of the Asylum, asking with loud cries that the Sisters should come to his wife and two children, who were dying of cholera. The heart of that good Mother was wrung with anguish.

" How can I name any one, " she cried, " for I shall be sending my poor children to death. "

Deeply moved, and her eyes full of tears, she went up to the dormitory and rang a bell to awaken the Sisters, saying aloud :

“ My dear daughters, Sisters are wanted for cholera patients ; who will be the first to go ? ”

“ I, I, ” cried several, rising altogether precipitately. A few minutes later, in the middle of that dark night, two Sisters set out bravely to face death. They were in time to have the patients administered and to place the three corpses, next morning, in the same coffin. The Mayor of the city, Mr. Raymond Fabre, displayed much zeal and activity in seeking to reduce the sources of contagion. He suggested that Mother Gamelin should open an hospital at the expense of the city. She eagerly accepted the proposal, and once more obtained through the charity of her cousin, Mrs. Nolan, the use of her house, on St. Catherine St., which remained open, under the name of the St. Camille Hospital, from the 1st of July, to the end of September. The medical direction thereof was confided to Dr. Beaubien, who displayed there, a zeal and devotedness, beyond all praise. One hundred and twenty-seven patients were received, of which seventy died.

The Hospital being opened to all cholera patients, without distinction of creed or race, forty-four Protestants were admitted there, and the Sisters had the happiness of seeing seven of these, embrace the true faith.

Heaven only demanded, one victim from our Community, Sister Jean de Dieu, in the world, Marguerite

Lefebvre. She had only been eight days professed. Being sent to Laprairie to take care of two Sisters, who were stricken with the epidemic, she was seized with the disease, while crossing the river, and died during the following night. Of angelic piety, perfect sweetness and docility, she had a keen relish for all spiritual exercises, her only thoughts being devotedness and forgetfulness of self for others. At the beginning of the epidemic, she offered herself as a victim, that priests might be saved from the contagion. Heaven accepted the offering of her virginal purity. Her body was buried on the very day of her death in the cemetery at Laprairie and later transported to that of the Community at Longue Pointe. May she rest in peace and may her prayers obtain for us the imitation of her generous devotedness.

The mission of Laprairie had witnessed, in the preceding year, the edifying death of Sister Augustine, in the world, Susanne Ladouceur, who died after an illness of a few days, of inflammation of the bowels.

A telegram announced to "Mother Gamelin," writes Sister Joseph of the Sacred Heart, "that our dear Sister Augustine, was dying. Although the crossing of the river was just then dangerous, because the ice was beginning to break, our Mother and I set out, to go and console that dear Sister in her last moments. The sight of our Mother seemed to awaken in our dear, dying Sister, the sweetest emotion. Our Mother encouraged her, and recommended to her the interests of the Community, once she had reached heaven." The patient replied as follows :

“ Will you please tell our dear Sisters, that I love them all and that I shall pray for them. Let them never forget that we are daughters of the Mother of Sorrows and that to resemble her, we must suffer here on earth.” (1) Mother Joseph, of the Sacred Heart goes on to say :

“ We were very near perishing in that crossing, the ice was breaking under the horses' feet and the water came up into the carriage. Nevertheless, the maternal heart of our Mother, was ready to surmount all difficulties when there was question of practicing charity. ”

On the 30th November, 1849, the whole household of the Asylum was assembled in the old womens' hall, to assist at a ceremony, which marked an epoch in the history of our Community. In presence of Mgr. Prince, Vicar General Truteau and our venerated Foundress, Melle Rose Grandpré dedicated herself to the service of the poor, as a lay auxiliary of the Institute ; she was the first to contract that engagement ; later she was clad in the livery of the Third Order, of the Servites of Mary.

The Third Order of the Servites of Mary sprang from the Religious Order of that name which took its rise in Italy, about the end of the thirteenth century. The foundation is more particularly attributed to St. Juliana Falconieri, who was directed by St. Philip Beniti, one of the glories of the Servite family.

Instituted like the religious of the first Order, to honor in a special manner the Dolors of the Mother of God, the daughters of St. Juliana, devoted themselves to the care of the sick and to works of charity, analogous to those undertaken, by the members of our Institute. That Community of works and of aim, inspired Mgr. Bourget, with the idea of engrafting upon our religious family, a branch of the Third Order of Servites. That project entered perfectly into the views of Mother Gamelin who established in 1849 a Congregation of lay Sisters, thus associating with the religious, auxiliaries, ready to help them in their labors.

The Third Order was inaugurated in the Institute, on the 1st June, 1863, with the authorization of the General of the Servites. It quickly prospered. To-day, the greater part of our houses in Canada and the United States, possess a certain number of Sister Tertiaries, who render them very great services. The latter find in return the advantages of a religious rule of the common life, and participation in the merits and spiritual goods of our Institute and of the Order of Servites, while being relieved from the responsibilities and obligations attached to the offices of the Community. From the temporal point of view, their living is secured for the remainder of their existence.

Sensible of these advantages, a large number of good and devoted girls, have asked for admission into this pious association. Their total number is at present three hundred and eighty-six.



## CHAPTER XIV

1849—1850

MOTHER GAMELIN'S ZEAL FOR THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE COMMUNITY ; HER CONFIDENCE IN HER ECCLESIASTICAL SUPERIORS.—HER HOSPITALITY.—SECOND JOURNEY TO THE UNITED STATES.—VISIT OF FATHER BOURLADEAU.

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As has been seen, Mother Gamelin, who practised virtue herself, in the highest degree, knew also how to inspire it in others. She spared no pains to penetrate her daughters with the spirit of the Institute, which she had founded, and which might be resumed in three words : humility, simplicity, charity.

“ As long as it shall be attached to those three roots,” she said, “ our little Institute will last ; but if you should seek, to graft upon it, other branches, however beautiful they may appear to you, you will only grow wild fruits, and our own will lose their savor.”

Her humility and self-distrust led her to seek the principle of her own conduct, and that of her spiritual family, in the constant direction of her ecclesiastical Superiors. She had frequent recourse to them and her confidence was absolute in the judgment, the enlightened views and the experience of Bishop Bourget.

She attached the greatest importance, to his pastoral visit, and never failed to ask for the favor of one, every year, as is shown by her letter of March 1850.

“ My Lord,

“ It is now almost a year, since we have had the happiness of a pastoral visit from you. Now, no less than last year, my Sisters and myself feel the need of it. Being still new to religion, we have need of all sorts of graces to enable us to accomplish with greater perfection, the works with which Divine Providence has entrusted us. That is why, we beg of your Lordship, to deign to grant us this favor, either before or after our Retreat, and we shall be eternally grateful.

“ We hope that in view of our miseries and imperfections, you will not deprive us, this year, of that privilege. Perhaps, Your Lordship may be compensated, sometime, for the trouble and anxiety which our formation to religious virtue has given you. Deign to take pity on your children, who are all in the dispositions, to profit by your charitable and paternal advice. ”

I have the honor to be, etc,

Sister Gamelin, Superior.

The pious prelate, had great pleasure in responding to this laudable desire, and gave himself, two consecutive Retreats, to his daughters. He acceded with the most

amiable condescension to the demands sometimes made upon him, for enlightenment upon various spiritual questions and points concerning the religious life. One day, Mother Gamelin acquainted him, with the desire of a young religious, to obtain more light upon the virtue of simplicity, of which she said, she often heard people speak, without having a very clear and precise idea in what it consisted. The holy Bishop responded with delicate kindness, to this praiseworthy request. At the beginning of the following year, by way of a New Year's gift, each religious received from him a copy of a letter on christian simplicity. Those epistles, so full of unction and piety, had been placed on New Year's eve, at the foot of the statue of Our Lady of Seven Dolors, and then on the altar of the Sacred Heart of Mary, to assure to its readers, the fruits of grace.

Our saintly Mother possessed in a high degree the christian simplicity of a soul which reveals itself as it is, without concealment or subterfuge ; its humility seeking neither to hide its weaknesses and defects, nor to deny its faults. She practised the same perfect honesty with herself, as with others. She carried this same quality into her examens, and the unveiling of her conscience, revealing the inmost depths of her soul to her directors, acquainting them with all its dispositions and sentiments, with perfect confidence and sincerity, that she might afterwards, place herself under their direction with the simplicity of a child. That virtue lent to her diction, her manners and her familiar intercourse with others, a singular charm which had much to do,

with that attraction which every one felt for her. The religious of other Communities, whom she received in the house, greatly appreciated her rare natural qualities, as well as her religious virtues, which they were thus able to observe in the various actions of her daily life. Mother Gamelin took the greatest trouble to provide for their entertainment. She was anxious to wait upon them herself and caused them to be accompanied while in the city by two of her Sisters, putting every thing in the house at their disposal, and with affectionate attention anticipating their wants.

These visits gave her an opportunity of inquiring into the works and the various kinds of labors, accomplished by houses of the same nature as her own; thus profiting by the light of others' experience.

She imparted, in return, to those religious, her own personal views and experiences and those of her Sisters, so that these visits and interviews were mutually advantageous.

The desire of gaining exact ideas and practical knowledge as to the organization of other institutions, had inspired Mother Gamelin and Mgr. Bourget, with the idea of the journey to the United States, and the visits, to the Daughters of Charity there, which Mother Gamelin, before her entrance into religion, had so successfully put into execution.

The same anxiety caused her to undertake a second journey, of the same nature, in the spring of 1850. The development of her work, and the foundation of new

houses, impelled her to have recourse, once more, to the experience of others, in order to ensure the success of her enterprises. In that journey of five weeks, together with her companion, Sister Ignace de Loyola, she visited the Institutions of the Daughters of Charity, in Albany, New York, and Emmitsburg. She was everywhere, received with the greatest cordiality, and found in some of the houses kindly remembrance, as well as the sympathetic acquaintances, of her first journey.

She drew closer the bonds of friendship which united her with Mother Stephen Hall with whom was maintained a mutual interchange of letters and good offices. In the month of August of the same year, our house was visited by Father Bourladeau, a Lazarist, and Superior of the Mother House at Emmitsburg. He preached in our chapel and invested all our Sisters with the Scapular of the Passion. Some dozens of these Scapulars made as is usual, of red cloth, had been graciously sent to our Sisters by the Superior at Emmitsburg.

The pious priest, congratulated our venerated Mother on the excellent condition and the progress of her work, and expressed his happiness at seeing the spirit which St. Vincent de Paul had bequeathed to his daughters flourishing in Canada, through the action of events no less clearly providential.

In multiplying those works and those foundations, Mother Gamelin was obliged to multiply proportionately those acts of zeal, of vigilance, and of devotedness, which absorbed more and more of her time, while consuming



her strength. Feeling the decline of her physical power, she constantly meditated upon the thought of death. On the 23rd of March, 1849, she wrote in her Journal of Retreat :

“ It seems to me, that I have but a short time to live upon this earth ; it is necessary for me, then, once for all to put my hand to the plough, without ever looking backwards. I hope all from the mercy of our good God.”

She often repeated, to her Sisters : “ It is a tribute which we must pay to the justice of God ; my hour will soon come. When your poor Mother shall have disappeared, do not forget to pray for her.”

She frequently exhorted them to be fervent, to maintain the spirit of their state, to seek after resignation, the love of the Cross and the fulfilment of their duty. Her zeal urged her to make the same, pressing appeals to those who were absent on the mission, whom she would have wished to see oftener. For she felt the need of communicating to them, by contact, with her own heart and her own persuasive words, that flame of charity and self-devotion, which burned in her own soul. She wrote to one of them in 1850 :

“ We must never forget that we are daughters of the Cross, and that we should love and cherish the Cross. I ask nothing more for you nor for myself ; but let us ask together, that we may carry with resignation, those crosses which the Lord may send us. We

know not what our good God may reserve for us, during the year that is just beginning... Courage, then, in our holy vocation. Let us take great care, of that which has been confided to us, by the Lord, namely the poor and the children, that they may help us to serve Him well. Heaven will be the price and the recompense of our labors. Meanwhile let us be faithful to the graces, which Our Lord has bestowed on us. I should like very much to go and see you. If it be the will of God I shall undertake that journey at the end of January, for I am anxious to confer a little with my dear missionaries."

Love of the poor and devotedness in their regard, fortified by the love of crosses and sufferings, such was her whole summary of religious life.

## CHAPTER XV

### 1850—1851

MOTHER GAMELIN'S LAST FOUNDATION.—THE DEAF MUTES.—CELEBRATION OF THE SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST PROFESSION IN THE INSTITUTE.—MGR. PRINCE APPOINTED BISHOP OF ST. HYACINTH.—MOTHER GAMELIN VISITS THE MISSIONS WHICH SHE FOUNDED. SHE PRESIDED FOR THE FIRST TIME OVER THE COUNCIL OF THE COMMUNITY.—HER ILLNESS AND DEATH.

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ON the 19th February, 1851, she saw the foundation, at Longue Pointe, of a new work, which was to be the last flower in the crown of our venerated

Mother here below. This was the institution of Deaf Mutes, which took its rise amongst innumerable difficulties and contradictions. Despite the objections and the misgivings of many people, who considered that work as absolutely useless, and as offering no hope of success, our saintly Foundress seconded by Sister Marie de Bonsecours, pursued that enterprise. It was not generally understood, at that time, in this country, that any one could dream of teaching those unfortunates, who were looked upon as inferior beings, utterly devoid of intelligence, and incapable of all moral culture. Sister Marie de Bonsecours, in the world, Albina Gadbois, (1) was the instrument chosen by God for that important work. Actively seconded by Mother Gamelin, Mgr. Bourget, and later by Mother Caron, she pursued with indefatigable energy, and a charity beyond all proof, that mission which had been confided to her by our venerated Foundress, and in spite of contradictions and obstacles of every sort.

The class opened, on the 19th February, with two pupils; by the end of the scholastic year, it numbered

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(1) Mr. Victor Gadbois, father of the Sisters Gadbois, and one of our signal benefactors, was a rich and much respected farmer of Belœil. Seven of his daughters became religious, five at the Providence, one at the Gray Nuns, and another with the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. The five religious of Providence were, Sister Ignace de Loyola, Marie de Bonsecours, Marie Victor, Marie Ildéphonse, Philippe de Jesus, all of whom have successively governed, with much ability and devotedness, some of the houses of our Institute.

ten. In the following year, the number was doubled. In 1857, it had risen to thirty-two. The school, which had then become too small, was temporarily transported, to the Hospice St. Joseph, in Montreal.

After some years of long and persevering work, these poor children, were instructed, in the first mysteries of the faith. Then, was revealed to them the existence of a good and merciful God, to whom they owed their life, who imposed duties upon them, and who reserved for them an eternal reward.

In 1864, the Institution was definitely established upon St. Denis St., on a splendid piece of ground, five hundred feet long by two hundred and thirty wide, donated by Mr. Côme Seraphin Cherrier, to whom our Community is indebted for many other gifts and services. That property, was later enlarged, by the addition of two fine pieces of ground, offered by the munificence of a prelate, Mgr. Vinet, who was one of the most devoted and signal benefactors of the Institution. It would be too long to retrace here, the history of that foundation, which would require a whole volume for itself. It must suffice, to give a brief summary of the aim and character of the work. Our Sisters devoted themselves to teach Deaf Mutes, the elements of religion, and to form them to the virtues and the practice of the christian life.

To extend the advantages of such education to a greater number of subjects, they even accepted those of a comparatively advanced age. Our Sisters, strove to develop their faculties, by such elementary instruction,

as was within their reach, besides training them to such manual labors, as would permit them later to gain an honest livelihood.

To attain that twofold object, our Sisters strove to perfect their system of teaching at the cost of great sacrifices. After having studied in 1851, the elements of the sign language at Joliette, under the Abbé Lagorce, Sister Marie de Bonsecours and her companion, went in 1853, to the United States, to pursue their studies under the celebrated Isaac Peet, Director of the Institute for Deaf Mutes, in New York. It was, then, on Washington Heights, where for a whole year, the Sisters followed the course of that particular school.

Two years later, they returned to New York, to perfect themselves in the practice of that difficult instruction. Having added to the sign language some attempts at articulation, they went in 1870, to Europe, to familiarize themselves with the oral method, which was then beginning to meet with success. On their return they inaugurated in this country, the regular teaching of articulation and of lip reading. But it was not until 1879 that the intuitive, pure oral, which in teaching, replaced signs and imitation, was applied in all its rigor.

For this purpose, the Abbé Trepanier, (1) to whom as

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(1) Reverend F. X. Trepanier, Honorary Canon of the Cathedral of Montreal, was for eighteen years attached to the Institution of the Deaf Mutes. He had beautiful and touching relations with the Abbé de l'Épée, Founder of the Instruction for Deaf Mutes, in France, and was the devoted chaplain



the real Father of the work for Deaf Mutes, so much is owing, made two successive voyages, to Europe, one in 1879, and one in 1884, to study all the latest improvements in that kind of teaching, in the establishments of Paris, Belgium and Germany. Under the active superintendence of that able and indefatigable director, the pure oral method, was thenceforth employed and with the happiest result. (2)

At the present time, the establishment for Deaf Mutes, placed under the invocation of Our Lady of Good Counsel, numbers 260 pupils and 54 religious. If from the height of heaven our venerated Mother looks down upon this work, may we not be permitted to think, that its progress and development are due to her powerful protection with God, as its beginning was the fruit of her unwavering confidence in His Providence.

On the 29th of March, 1851, Mother Gamelin desired to celebrate with due solemnity, the seventh anniversary of the foundation of the Institute. The memory of that never to be forgotten day, inspired thrilling songs of joy and gratitude, but for our venerated Mother it was already the Vesper song. By that same day,

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of the Deaf Mutes in Montreal. But the humility of our benefactor and friend might be wounded, were we to say more, and that would lessen in his eyes, the homage of our gratitude.

Author's Note.

(2) Since the above was written, Father Trepanier passed to his reward.

Trans., note.

in the following year, her voice was heard no more in those canticles of gladness ; she was already singing for eternity, in the choirs of the heavenly courts.

It seemed as if our little family, now solidly established, had no farther need of those human helps, which had assured and guided its beginning, since God was withdrawing them one by one.

It was during the course of the year 1851, that He was going to call His holy servant to Himself ; and before her death, God willed that she, as well as her daughters, should be deprived of the devotedness and the valuable assistance of him who had been in reality, their second Founder, while acting as chaplain, or as ecclesiastical Superior. At the moment of undertaking a voyage to Europe, Mgr. Prince definitely relinquished the latter office.

That was a very great trial to our Community, which had been united to him by the closest and most enduring bonds. He had displayed, where our mothers were concerned, a constant devotion, an ever active zeal and an exceeding, great charity. The light of his wisdom and experience had been freely placed at their disposal, to form them to the religious life and to christian perfection ; and if, at times, his direction was severe and even rigorous, it was easy for them to understand that it was because he wanted to produce souls of strong temper, fitted for the duties and the virtues of their state, and to establish the life of our Community, on the solid basis of an austere and firmly grounded virtue.

The name of that holy prelate with that of Mgr. Bourget, will remain inseparably connected with the inception of our Community. Mgr. Prince, who became Bishop of St. Hyacinth, ever retained a kindly and paternal interest in the Community, whose first steps in the religious life he had sustained and guided. Nine years later, on his bed of death, he asked his secretary, Father Moreau, (1) to write in his name, to our Superior General, to give his family a last token of remembrance and a final proof of his affection.

“ Reverend Mother,

“ The tender affection, which you and your Community have ever entertained, for His Lordship of St. Hyacinth, makes it my duty, to communicate to you, the sentiments which he has just expressed in your regard. This is what he said to me, a few moments ago : “ Write to my dear Daughters of the Providence, to thank them most affectionately for the filial attachment which they have shown me, and the good services which they have rendered to me, and to my diocese. Tell them that I give them my last blessing, asking the good God, from the bottom of my heart to make them prosper in all their holy enterprises ; and that if God, in His mercy, gives me a place in His bosom, I shall continue, to interest myself in them.”

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(1) Afterwards Mgr. Moreau, Bishop of St. Hyacinth.



Mgr, JEAN CHARLES PRINCE,  
First Chaplain of the Institute,  
1843-1844.  
First Ecclesiastical Superior,  
1845-1850.





I copied these words, with the greatest care, and I gladly transmit them to you, for they are the testament of a father to his beloved daughters." (1)

I. Z. Moreau,  
Secretary.

At the end of May, our venerated Mother undertook the official visitation of the houses she had founded, and which, exclusive of the Mother House, already numbered seven, the Providence of Longue Pointe, the Hospice St. Joseph, in Montreal, the Providence at Laprairie, that of St. Elizabeth, the Hospice of St. Jerome Emilianus, the Providence of Sorel, (2) and St. James' School. Everywhere, she recommended to her Sisters, the love of the poor, union, reciprocal charity and confidence in God.

"Do not fear," she used to say, "as long as you are surrounded by the poor, Providence will be your fostering mother and your faithful treasurer; believe me, you will want for nothing."

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(1) Mgr. Prince died on the 5th May, 1860, aged 56 years, of which fourteen had been spent in the episcopate. At his obsequies, were present, seven Bishops, one hundred and fifty priests and an immense concourse of the faithful, all desirous of paying solemn homage to a prelate who had honored both the priesthood and the episcopate, by his virtues and who rendered eminent service to the Church.

(2) This house was founded at Sorel in 1850, for works of charity and primary instruction. It was closed, 1858.

In the beginning of the month of September, while visiting the mission of St. Elizabeth, for which she had a particular affection, because of the gentle and amiable saint, (1) whose name it bore, she had a presentiment of her approaching end. The day after her arrival, in company with Sister Caron and two Ladies of charity, she went to call upon a benefactress of the Convent, who lived at some distance from the village. The weather was fine although very warm.

Our Mother insisted upon making that visit on foot, that she might the better enjoy the beauties of nature which she had always passionately loved, and which helped her to raise her soul to God. After a quarter of an hour's walk, feeling somewhat fatigued, she sat down at the foot of a tree and pronounced in a tone of great sadness, these singular words: "The air is heavy, it is cholera weather." Some days later, when tenderly taking leave of her daughters, she addressed them in these solemn words: "Farewell, my dear daughters; I now see you for the last time. I have prayed to good St. Elizabeth, that you may always love the poor, and that peace and union, may ever be preserved amongst you." That was the 10th of September. Tears flowed from every eye, but those present were far from realizing that that melancholy prophecy, was so soon to be fulfilled.

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(1) Mother Gamelin professed a particular devotion to St. Elizabeth of Hungary. She loved to pray to her and to confide the poor to her protection. She had given her name to the first ward opened to the aged and infirm, in 1844

On her return to the Asylum, our Mother busied herself in regulating all the affairs of the house. Hitherto the ecclesiastical Superior, Mgr. Bourget had presided over the Councils of the Community. Mgr. Prince had lately resigned the office of Superior, and Mother Gamelin, begged of Bishop Bourget, to have the kindness to preside over the next Council.

The Bishop responded by authorizing her to preside herself for the future, over the Councils, judging her perfectly capable of acquitting herself well of that function. That reply, at first, alarmed the humility of our dear Mother and of her councillors, accustomed as they were to receive direction from their ecclesiastical Superiors in their deliberations ; but they made no difficulty about acting in conformity with a decision, wherein they saw, as in all the orders and suggestions, of diocesan authority, the will of God.

The Bishop's decision, in any case, inaugurated a new epoch, in the life of our congregation. It seemed to declare that its daughters had acquired, sufficient wisdom and experience, to take henceforward, a greater initiative in their affairs and in their internal government.

Mother Gamelin consequently presided, for the first time and for the last, over the Council of September 22nd, which was the last day of her life. Here again, it seemed, as if God wanted to signify to the little family, that its future was sufficiently assured, to be deprived of its first Mother and to be more completely abandoned to the guidance of his Providence.

During that session, wherein many questions were treated, our venerated Mother appeared deeply moved. She made an urgent exhortation to her daughters on the duties and the virtues of their state, recommending very specially, charity towards the novices. (1)

She came forth from that session, with a lively expression of joy and happiness imprinted upon her countenance. Did she feel in the depth of her being a profound satisfaction, at seeing her work so solidly established, having passed through the difficulties and the painful uncertainties of its beginning! Was her soul inwardly singing its *Nunc dimittis*? Or did God desire that the last hours of a life that was mysteriously approaching its term, should be illumined by the first rays of that life of peace and happiness, that was soon to dawn for her eternally.

Did not God also give in that last hour, as it were, a revelation of her purity of soul, to those of her daughters, who might read these lines, written by their Mother, in her Journal of Retreats, on the 16th of the preceding March: "In presence of the whole Community, during prayers this morning, it seemed to me that I was about to appear before God and I trembled. I took the resolution of laboring with all my strength, to put myself into a state to appear in the

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(1) At this Council, Sister Marie de la Presentation, Marie du St Sacrement, and Francis Borgia, were admitted to profession.

presence of my Sovereign Judge. I was frozen with terror at the thought of sudden death. I threw myself into the arms of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors. She will help me to cross the stormy sea of this poor life. She will sustain me in danger. That thought rendered me calm and confident." (1)

That Mother of the Seven Dolors, in whom she placed all her confidence, responded, in fact, to her appeal. It was she without doubt, who filled her soul with that peace and sweet serenity, which shone, resplendent on her countenance, and lent to her speech an unwonted gaiety.

Her daughters remarked it during the evening recreation. Never had she appeared, in better health or better disposed. Neither her appearance, nor her bearing, betrayed any signs of suffering or indisposition. That was, however, her last evening, and the night which followed was to reveal to her the approaches and the bitterness of death.

About four in the morning, she felt the first pains of that deadly malady, the symptoms of which were so familiar to her, and immediately calling the Sister, who shared the room with her, she said to her :

" My dear Sister, I am going to die, I have got cholera. I would like to be taken up to the infirmary, so as to die, like my Sisters, in the common room." Some of the Sisters, hurriedly awakened, carried her to the infirmary, without being able, however, to share her apprehensions. No one was willing to believe in

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(1) Journal of 1850.



the gravity of the illness nor in the imminence of the danger. But, Alas! they were obliged to accept the diagnosis and the opinions of two doctors, who were called without delay.

Her nephew, Dr. Tavernier and Dr. Deschambault, both testified as to the gravity of the illness, and confessed that their art, was powerless to effect a cure. The patient thanked them and begged them not to give her any sedative, since she wished to preserve to the last, the use of her faculties and her lucidity of mind. The Community apprised of the impending calamity, was in desolation.

Who can describe, how ardent were the supplications, that were addressed to God and to the Mother of Sorrows, for so precious a life. The poor, the religious, the Ladies of Charity, succeeded each other, in the chapel, weeping, praying, even offering up their life for her, whose death would create so great a void. In vain, did they seek by every means to soften heaven, and if their prayers were not heard, it was because, God willed that his faithful servant should wait no longer, for her reward. Her crown was ready, and the good and merciful Master, longed to address her in those words of the promise :

“I was hungry and you gave me to eat ; I was a prisoner and you visited me. I was naked and you clothed me ; come then to possess my Kingdom for all eternity.”

The dying religious, had always, during the whole

course of her life, dreaded that terrible moment. Therefore, she felt, at first a lively fear, but she very soon recovered a great peace, and saw thenceforth, in death, only the will of God and the final passage, to be crossed before being united with Him. That saying of St. Vincent de Paul was verified in her: "Whosoever has loved the poor during life, shall have no fear at the hour of death." She wished to make her last confession to Mgr. Prince, who had so often received her confidences and avowals, and restored peace to her soul. Then she had a long interview with Mgr. Bourget, who administered Extreme Unction to her and gave her the plenary indulgence. She was able, which is something sufficiently rare, in that disease, to receive the Holy Viaticum and to preserve her consciousness till the last moment. About eleven o'clock in the morning, when the Community were admitted to her presence, they could scarcely recognize her; her color was livid, the eyes deeply sunken in their sockets, the lips blanched; but she retained full possession of her senses, and, seemed perfectly at peace. She greeted each of her daughters with maternal affection, and though unable to speak, because of her extreme weakness, she embraced them all in a glance which told all her tenderness.

Her strength rapidly declined, and Mgr. Bourget began to recite the prayers for the dying, to which she responded by piously kissing the Crucifix. When the prayer was ended, she murmured some words, in the Bishop's ears: It was her final recommendation to her daughters, which the pious prelate, immediately transmitted to them in a voice, choked by emotion :

"I transmit to you," he said, "the testament of your Mother. May it always be the basis of your perfection; humility, simplicity, charity." — "Above all," gasped the dying religious, "cha...ri...."

She had not strength to finish. Pressing by a last movement the Crucifix to her breast, she expired, in murmuring that word which resumed her whole life, as it resumes the religion of Christ.

It was, then, four o'clock in the afternoon.

The scene which followed is indescribable.

Amazement, sorrow, consternation, were mingled in every heart. It was hard to believe in that death so sudden and unforeseen, and that she was no more, who but the evening previous, overflowing with life, strength and gaiety, presided over the Council, and addressed to her Sisters, advice full of wisdom and authority.

When the tolling of the funeral bell, attested the sad truth, there was a heartrending outburst of sobs and lamentations. The poor hastened thither from all parts, invading the avenue, and the corridor near the chapel, begging that they might be allowed to see the body of their Mother, and at least, to kiss her feet. It was necessary, alas, to refuse them that last consolation; for the contagious nature of the disease, demanded the greatest prudence.

She was immediately placed in an humble pine coffin, her body clad in her religious habit; it was covered with a layer of quick lime, and her features disappeared for ever, from the gaze of those who had loved her.

That was on the 23rd of September, 1851, the third day of the Octave for the Feast of Our Lady of seven Dolors.

Our venerated Mother was fifty-one years of age. She had spent seven in religion.

Her funeral had to take place at once, and without any solemnity. The sorrow of her daughters, of her old people and orphans, was its only and touching adornment. The service took place, the next morning. It was sung by Mgr. Prince, who officiated at the obsequies. The coffin was lowered into the crypt of the Church, and placed in a brick vault, under the sanctuary, on the gospel side.

There may be read her simple epitaph :

To The Memory

Of

The Reverend Mother Gamelin

Born

Marie, Eugene, Emmelie Tavernier,

Foundress and First Superior of the Institute  
of Sisters of Charity of the Providence.

Died

September, 23rd 1851,

Aged 51 Years, 7 Months, and 3 Days.

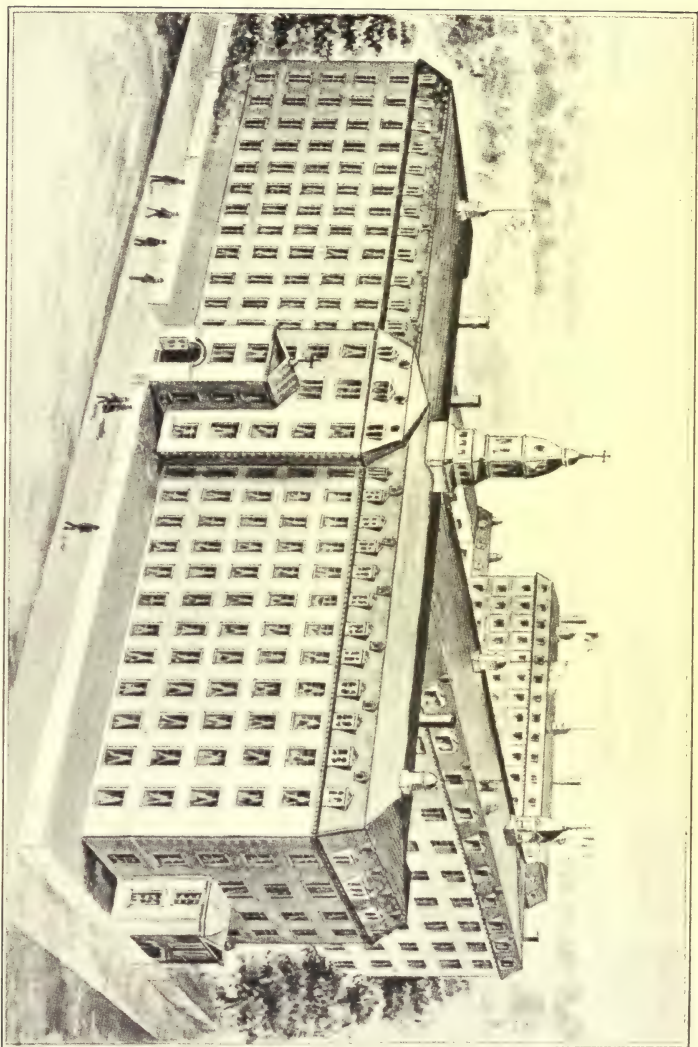
“She hath considered a field and bought it; with the fruit of her hands she hath planted a vineyard.”

Prov. XXXI-16.

The precious remains of our holy Foundress, have reposed there for more than half a century, in the shadow of that monument erected by her zeal and charity. Beside her grave, one reflects upon the glory eternal, whence she looks down and protects her religious family ; and upon her works, which are extending and progressing every day, in the eyes of heaven for the relief of the poor and suffering of the great human family, while recalling the words of the Psalmist : “ Her branches shall extend, and her glory shall be like to that of the olive tree, and her perfume like that of the Libanus. They shall return to sit in her shadow, they shall live upon wheat and shall blossom like the vine.”

THE END.





VIEW OF THE PRESENT MOTHER HOUSE, on Fullum Street  
inaugurated in 1888.



# APPENDIX



# APPENDIX

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Extract from the autographic Journal of the Retreats of Our  
venerated Mother Gamelin.

1846—1850

## NOTES

ON MY DAYS OF RETREAT, FOR THE RENEWAL OF  
VOWS, MARCH, 1846.

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The eve, full of trials ; the first day and night, no rest ; fear of not making the Retreat well.

I was much struck this morning, to see seven Sisters at prayer ; we, who are the daughters of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours, destined to make her honored and to propagate her devotion. It seemed to me, that our good Mother must have been most afflicted by the Fourth Sorrow, the meeting of her Divine Son, carrying His Cross to Calvary. I prayed very hard to that good Mother, to help me to carry my Crosses, for I am so terrified by those that come to me, and have so little courage to accept them with resignation.

In the afternoon, more confidence in the goodness of God. I made the Way of the Cross, and felt an attraction to meditate on the sufferings of Our Lord. I took a resolution to make the Stations often, and I asked pardon of God for my negligence and slothfulness, in so often putting off that exercise, which He seems to exact of me. During that meditation. I also resolved to pass no day without invoking the Name of Mary, Mother of Sorrows, by some pious ejaculations. I am going to make new efforts to overcome myself, and with the grace of God from on high, to be faithful to my resolutions.



2nd DAY : I have formulated in presence of God my desire to labor for my perfection and to be resigned to whatever is required of me, considering that those crosses which I find so heavy, are only ladders by which to reach heaven. I therefore thanked God, that He has not spared me in the trials which I have experienced, since I have been a religious and I said : O my God, may thy will, not mine be done. No matter what happens, nothing can befall me without thy permission ; perfect confidence, then, in Divine Providence.

3rd DAY : Stormy weather for my soul : temptations of various sorts ; am incapable of one good thought, or even a pious aspiration ; discouragement ; no rest that night.

4th DAY : The prayer touched me deeply ; the enormity of my offences, all the sins of my life were presented to my mind and I meditated in silence on the various phases of my life ; in all, I had a horror of myself. How many sins, imperfections ! Such levity in my conduct, to please the world.

O my God, what shall I do to repair all, after so many graces lost. What most touched me, was my abuse of the gifts, which were given me to work, in a special manner for my sanctification ; for I saw very clearly, how ungrateful I had been to abuse so many graces, from the time that I came to the use of reason. Profound reflections on my own miseries. What can I do at the present time, I, a worm of the earth, dust and ashes, at the head of a growing community, which I am so little capable of guiding, and where so much virtue and such good example are required. Speak, O my God, say what Thou wilt of me ; thy servant heareth.

It seemed to me, that I must throw myself, as a child, into the arms of its Mother. Have pity on me, according to the multitude of thy great mercy. I wish with all my heart, to expiate my faults by penance. Long reflections on all my spiritual miseries . . . . I saw that the crosses, with which Our Lord has been pleased to afflict me, are nothing in reality.

5th DAY : On Hell ; I considered that our good God is too merciful to send me to hell, after having called me

to the religious life. He had merciful designs upon me. The enormity of my offences, somewhat troubled me, but calm returned after the tempest. I am more tranquil.

6th DAY : Confidence in Our Lord ; peace at the foot of the Cross, without consolation, however ; I am not worthy of it. I reproached myself for my want of zeal, in making the Stations of the Cross, and reciting the Chaplet of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors. I formed the resolution of making new efforts over myself, and I said : Lord, I want to follow Thee, very often, to Calvary. I will go there every day, to find courage for the troubles and trials inseparable from my state. The day was spent in meditating on the Passion and the Dolors of the Blessed Virgin ; serious and profound reflections, that condemn my conduct.

7th DAY : Calm ; full confidence in the mercy of my God ; resignation to bear the crosses that it may please Our Lord to send me. Anxiety as to the means to be taken to correct myself. Very great desire to communicate next day, despite my imperfections. In presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament, I thought I saw, that my resolution of the Retreat should be to govern this house well, much sweetness and great charity, in bearing with the faults of others ; great exactitude in the observance of the Rules, first for myself, and then for others, to be very firm, where that point is concerned ; blind obedience to my Superiors. I have a firm hope that help from on high, will change my dispositions during this Retreat, and that I shall walk fearlessly from this time forth. I shall have more courage, in bearing my crosses and submitting with resignation to the trials, which have seemed to me so severe. The happiness of communicating next day, caused me to experience a great calm.

8th DAY : I had the consolation of receiving my God and communing with Him who alone can give joy of heart. It seems to me, that I am more courageous to-day. One of my resolutions is to pray unceasingly, that I may be faithful and persevering, in all that is required of me, for the good

of this Community. To act in such a manner that the devotion to Our Lady of the Seven Dolors may be propagated, especially in our houses as also that of the Way of the Cross; having learned, that at the foot of Calvary, we may draw from an inexhaustible source, and that with a little courage, the perfection demanded by our holy state may be obtained. I hope for this grace from you, O my God, please do not refuse it to me.

Resolutions of my Retreat.

March 28th, 1846.

Much gentleness and charity towards my inferiors. To forget their most salient faults, and to remember only those which belong to me personally. Fidelity in observing the Rules. -- Blind obedience to my Superiors in all things.

Deign, O Lord, to strengthen these resolutions. Thou seest the depths of my heart, and Thou knowest of what slime I am composed; Thou knowest that I love Thee, in spite of great imperfections.

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## NOTES

ON THE SECOND RETREAT, BEGUN ON THE

18TH MARCH, 1847.

The eve of the Retreat, suffering.

The next day, little fervor, because of that indisposition. Fear of not making my Retreat, and that I may be the same afterwards. Finding so many obstacles, which are opposed to perfection, I am discouraged before beginning. Seeing that lately, several persons had come to ask me to make peace in their families, and that God in His great mercy, has deigned to make use of me, to put an end, to many fearful evils, I have been anxious to know the will of God, in that regard. I sought advice and I have been fully instructed as to how I should proceed in the future.

2nd DAY : More courage. In silence I reviewed my whole life, and I discovered many salient faults. I reflected that I must do penance, and that it is very just I should suffer in this life to expiate the sins of my past existence. I found myself unworthy to be at the head of a Community of Virgins, who have never known the evil that reigns in the world, being all pure in the eyes of Our Lord, in comparison with a woman of the world, who has taken part in all its amusements and who deserves, with good reason, to be punished and humiliated. I have prayed to Our Lord, not to spare me in this world, and to give me courage to bear the humiliations, which seem so hard to poor human nature, and which are so deeply wounding to self love... Again, a new resolution to labor for the correction of my faults.

3rd DAY : What I found most striking was the meditation on hell. I reflected a great deal and I said to myself : No, hell is not for this Community, all the members of which, have the desire to do good, as I also have at this moment. All have their faults, it is true, but like me, they want to labor for their perfection. In the future, we shall have more courage, than in the past, to make those sacrifices, which our good God, demands of us.

In the presence of my God, and relying on His great mercy, I cast myself at His feet, saying : Thou art too just, O Lord, to permit that I should be amongst the number of the damned. Thou knowest the sacrifices that I had to make in becoming a religious and in doing what it was Thy will I should do. That thought gave me courage to make new efforts over myself, day by day. I want to profit by this Retreat, to put my hand to the plough, once for all. It is for Thee, O Lord, that I labor to rid myself of my imperfections. Thou seest the depths of my heart, and Thou knowest that I love Thee. O my God, give me strength to walk with great strides, in the way of perfection. This I most earnestly desire, for the edification of this Community. I have need of thy help, O Lord, since Thou hast called me to give an example to my daughters in all things ; I can do nothing of myself, for I



have not the courage to do that which Thou dost inspire me, for my perfection. Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth, and is willing to obey.

4th DAY : Meditation on the Prodigal Son. I found myself like the Prodigal Son, having returned to my God, after the wanderings of my worldly youth. I meditated, O my God, on thy goodness in my regard, since Thou hast had the patience to wait for me so many years, and hast bestowed upon me, a conscience that reproaches me unceasingly with the imperfections of my life, in all the states, through which I have passed. I thank Thee, O God, for the grace of my vocation to the religious life. Thou alone, O my God, dost inspire me with that design. My crosses, which I find so great, are nothing in comparison to the graces Thou grantest me every day. My interior trials make me profit by the inspirations which Thou dost send me at each affliction which I experience. In that meditation I felt impelled to perform some penances on Friday, in honor of the Passion of Our Lord and the Dolors of His most Holy Mother, to implore the mercy of our good God for me and for the Community, which the Lord has charged me, unworthy as I am, to govern. Also, for the poor sinners of my family, more particularly than for others, and for myself, O God, who am, perhaps, the cause.

5th DAY : I placed myself in the presence of Our Lord, in prayer, and put my confidence in His mercy. I had a great desire to go to confession, but I could not. Submission to that trial for five days. I offered it as a punishment for the consolation, which I should have had in satisfying myself in that particular. I made serious reflections and I found that that trial was for the greater good of my soul.

6th DAY : Very much troubled about my confession, having my mind, much disturbed by a variety of thoughts, that I would not be able to finish my Retreat, that it was too late to make my review of the year. Discouragement and a great desire to give it all up. Ill also, my head very tired, with all that worry ; no rest all that night. By the grace of God I have surmounted all these temptations which have



assailed me. I invoked Mary, Mother of the Seven Dolors, and begged her to have pity on me and to obtain for me, peace to finish my Retreat courageously.

7th DAY : A little calmer. I have been to confession this morning, and have recovered from my weakness. The advice of Mgr. Prince, gave me more strength and courage to make new efforts, over myself, and to begin a new life.

This I have then the resolution to do, in presence of the Blessed Sacrament. I reflected on all my spiritual miseries, and I strove to impress upon my memory, the salutary advice which was given me regarding my whole conduct. Oh, how great are those miseries ! How many imperfections, in myself as a whole !

Lord who seest the depth of my heart have pity on me, give me the grace to labor, with new courage, and to correct so many of my faults, which are a source of disedification to my Sisters. Subject of profound meditation. What wilt thou have of me, O Lord ? Still more sacrifices ? And it came into my mind that I was still too much attached to something.

I made known to Mgr. Prince, that it would cost me a great deal to part from that one thing, which I loved to kiss and to gaze upon : that was the locks of hair belonging to my little children, which I had cherished as relics, very precious to me. He required me to part from them, after having kept them for twenty-three years, and to put them into the vault where I shall be buried, that they may be placed in my coffin after death. Oh, what a sacrifice that cost me, and what tears in the sight of God ! I must obey what has been commanded, to punish myself for my too great tenderness towards them, and my too sensible satisfaction, in kissing them, and regarding them with complacency here on earth.

Not knowing how I should get sufficient courage to go down into the vault, I asked Sister Séné, to go with me, having confided to her my trouble in this matter. In the vault I considered the place where I should be buried, and I commanded my dear, little children to take pity on their poor mother, and to pray for her ; they, who from the height of

heaven see my miseries, that they may obtain for me, the spirit of sacrifice, to bear the pains and crosses belonging to my state. I felt consoled by the thought that they being denizens of heaven, could be useful to me on earth. Therefore, on the stormy days, I shall have recourse to them ; they will console and help me, in all my daily trials. Pray, my good, little angels, for your poor mother, who commands you not to forget her, before the throne of the Eternal Father.

8th DAY : Fear of finding myself going out from my Retreat, with so little courage, to follow the path that has been traced out for me. I made my Communion and I am busy with my resolutions. I saw Father Martin who restored peace to my soul. I thank the good God, for having allowed me to commune with Him, for eight days. I asked once more, to be allowed to partake of the Community food. It was not thought proper to grant my request, because of my weak digestion. Once more a new trial, again I must obey, in that particular. I am stronger this afternoon. I begged Our Lady of the Seven Dolours, to take pity on the Community and especially on me, who am the most imperfect.

Practical subject for meditation given by Mgr. Prince, to be made during the year, with a view to my perfection :

“ Learn from your Divine Master to be meek and humble of heart, and thou shalt find true happiness here below.”

No other advice to be put into practice, but those few words.

Retreat ended, March 25th, 1847.

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## NOTES

ON MY THIRD RETREAT, WHICH BEGAN ON THE

5TH APRIL, 1848, BY FATHER TELLIER.

On the eve, indifference.

1st DAY : Little fervor, many struggles, impossibility of fixing my mind upon a given thought. What most struck me

this afternoon, is the end for which I became a religious ; it is to save my soul, and to labor for my perfection, I strove to convince myself, that I should have been lost in the world. It seems very clear to me that the good God demands from me, more sacrifices and more generosity ; and I said to my Lord :

“ My God, do with me what Thou wilt ; give me the courage to accomplish thy designs upon me.” It seemed to me that our good God, wanted to make me pass through other trials which I seemed to see before me. Courage, O my soul. My God, resignation to thy holy will.

2nd DAY : Meditation on sin. I considered myself, at the head of a Community, and very unworthy to lead virgins. Those maidens, with whom I have been entrusted, have never known evil, and have not offended God as I have done. How many sins in my life ! My God, how great have been Thy mercies in my regard ! I have become a religious, bound by vows ; and I have been given a great charge. How have I acquitted myself thereof? . . . That thought makes me tremble, in all my being. Lord, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. I have had so little courage in bearing my crosses, which have always proceeded from my own imperfections, my too great sensibility, and great self-seeking. Always the fear of being reproved by my Superiors.

Afternoon, meditation on hell. O my God, what profound reflections. I have often deserved hell, and I should have fallen into it, but that Thou hadst pity on me. Thou hast placed me in this holy house ; can I complain any more of what I suffer, considering that I desire to suffer still more. I recalled, during that meditation, the vision which I had, while in my agony, 1838. I saw the place prepared for me in heaven ; it was shown me by the Blessed Virgin, and she told me that I should not die of that illness. My crown had not enough diamonds in it, and my good Mother sent me away, saying that I must correct myself of my impatience ; that I was wanting in charity and gentleness, towards my old people,

that I must be more gentle and humble, in my conduct. I saw my children, who seemed as if they wished to draw me towards them. I also saw my husband, amongst the number of the blessed. This remembrance encouraged me to labor with new courage for my perfection. Yes, my God, cost what it may, I wish to save my soul. The thought that I have a place in heaven consoled me. I have greater courage to accept with resignation, whatever God may be pleased to send me. I shall avoid hell by greater vigilance over myself.

3rd DAY : My first thought was one of discouragement ; violent temptations to turn me away from confession. Meditation on the Judgment. I rely upon the merits of my Savior, being full of hope that He will have pity on me, according to His great mercy. The day was spent in preparing for confession, to which I gave two hours. Great interior troubles. Fear that absolution would be of no use to me. My God, what imperfections in my life ! My predominant fault, too great self-seeking, in all my actions. I have abandoned myself to the great mercy of God, who never rejects a contrite and humble heart. I have received pardon for all the sins of my past life. Forget, O Lord, the sins of my youth and only remember in my regard, thy great mercy.

4th DAY : I had the happiness of communicating. I experienced great consolation. It seems to me that I can die, since I have nothing to reproach myself with, and that I cannot be better prepared at my death. I made that Communion in reparation for the negligences of all those of the year. I thanked God for having called me to the religious life. How different are the joys of the world, from those which are experienced in the service of the Lord !

In the meditation on the interior life, I lamented my want of fervor. I am always more occupied with the temporal concerns of the house, than with the spiritual. I took the resolution that my task should be to preserve recollection, and both as regarded myself and others, to be more interested in the spiritual. I hope with the grace of God, to be faithful thereto. To-day, I have experienced a joy that is very sweet and a great



calm. I thank Thee, O my God, for having had pity on me, whom I have so much offended. I thank Thee for having given me that day of consolation. Thou knowest how weak I am, and Thou wilt help me to rise.

5th DAY: Meditation on the Birth of Our Lord. His poverty and obedience. What struck me most in that Meditation, is the happiness of the religious life. I asked pardon of God for my interior and exterior complaints, as to the privations of every day life, with regard to the vow of poverty. I thanked God that He has made me feel more, perhaps, than others, the privations of poverty. Resolution to be upon my guard for the future.

O my God, what merciful designs, Thou hast had upon me, at all times. When I review my whole life, I find everywhere, thy hand outstretched to me, and as if in spite of myself. Weak and miserable creature, I tremble when I am obliged to make any sacrifice. The day has been calm. I have had some consolation. I made a Spiritual Communion. I desired to communicate sacramentally. I felt impelled to ask for that favor, but I considered that I well deserved to be deprived of it, in punishment for so many lukewarm Communions. I made the Stations of the Cross, for our dear deceased Sisters. I shall make them every day. It seems to me, that so to say, I am forced to do so. The whole day was spent in making good resolutions. I begged of our good God, that I should never forget these days of Retreat, wherein I have enjoyed so many consolations, and where freed from daily occupations, I have been so well occupied in communing with Him, and exposing to Him my innumerable needs, as also those of the whole Community. I have asked that I may direct this house, with gentleness, humility and charity. I have asked that the devotion to Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, should always be propagated. I thanked our good God for having inspired Father Tellier to speak to us of this devotion.



My first thought on going into Retreat, was that I should not forget our poor Sisters who are at rest in the vaults. It seemed to me, that that is what they are asking of us all, and that our prayers will open heaven for them, if they have not already entered there.

6th DAY: Meditation on the Two Standards. My God, Thou knowest well that I have long ago, chosen thy side. But Alas ! what have I done for Thee up to the present time ! I am like that poor sluggard, of whom he spoke in his instruction. I have always had a fear of advancing, so much does human nature rebel against, and become alarmed at the slightest restraint. I deplored my innumerable faults, my want of courage, in doing violence to myself and overcoming self. I again took a resolution to labor once for all for my perfection. I seem to have greater strength. I sought to discover all my imperfections, one after the other, and I begged for grace to know myself better, in the calm of that Retreat. The day passed peacefully. During the meditation, I felt a great desire to pray for the conversion of sinners, above all for some persons in whom I am interested and whose salvation I have at heart ; also for the poor souls in purgatory, for whom I have made the Stations of the Cross every day.

7th DAY: I experienced an ardent desire and a great happiness in Communicating this morning, though I have only been able to do so spiritually. Many consolations in prayer. It seemed to me as if I were in heaven, so great was the happiness that I felt in communing with our good God, I experienced an intoxication, that I could not define. That state of the soul with God, which I have enjoyed sometimes in my Communion, must be experienced before it can be understood. After those consolations, I experienced great pain, which was caused by my director. Reflecting afterwards in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, that he had been given to me as my guide, by God, in whose place he stood, and had, by Him, been chosen to lead me to that perfection that God demands of me, I prayed earnestly that he might be enlightened. For

my part, all I have to do, is to obey; it matters little, whether I am treated gently or harshly. After these reflections, peace was restored to my soul, which had been previously so much disturbed by that little trial.

8th DAY : Calm and tranquillity. I prayed and made resolutions for the future. It seems to me, that our good God will grant what I have asked so earnestly during my Retreat ; the spirit of sacrifice and of self-abnegation in all things. I discovered that the predominant fault, in me is self-seeking in all my actions. The instruction on heaven encouraged me. Life is so short ; why should we have so much fear of denying ourselves ? One day we shall enjoy the presence of God. Great confusion, during my prayers, at my little courage, in doing violence to myself. I asked pardon of God, with all my heart, for so many miseries, in my poor nature that is so weak in doing good. My God have pity on me, out of thy great mercy. Forgive the sins of my youth and those of the present time.

Resolutions of my Retreat, which ended, April 13th, 1848.

For daily penances, I will make, several times, during the day, acts of self-denial in my actions, thoughts, words, in my judgment and my will ; as also in my food, and in the ease which I might permit myself ; in a word in all things. I shall impose a penance, on myself, each time that I fail. My subject for the particular examen, will be self-denial. Virtue of abnegation, which I am to practice all the year, given by Mgr. Prince.

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## NOTES

ON MY FOURTH RETREAT, BEGUN ON THE 28TH MARCH, 1849, BY  
CANON TRUTEAU.

The eve, indifference.

On the day, itself, incapable of meditation. Before the second meditation, I was like a beast of burden ; however, during that meditation, God reproached me for not having labored sufficiently for the conversion of sinners. I have not

given serious enough thought to the state of their souls, nor prayed sufficiently for them. Perhaps, our good God, is asking of me, some penances or sacrifices that I have not the courage to make.

I made the Way of the Cross for the conversion of some members of my family, who are in need of it. I was deeply moved at the Eighth Station, when I considered Jesus saying to the women of Jerusalem not to weep for Him, but for themselves. I seemed to hear Our Lord telling me, not to grieve for the Community with which He has entrusted me, nor for the sins and imperfections of others, but to weep for myself.

My God, help me to know myself, and to obtain the grace to correct myself ; during this Retreat, let me take a practical resolve for the future.

2nd DAY: Somewhat uneasy as to my state of indifference, concerning my present dispositions. The goodness of my God touched me; that good Master wills that I should rely on myself. I confidently hope that I shall be able to put into practice all that grace inspires me to do for my advancement in the great way of perfection.

3rd DAY: The thought of death and judgment terrifies me. It seems to me, that I have so little time to live on earth ; it seems to me, that I should once for all put my hand to the plough without looking backwards. I hope all from the mercy of my God, who has pardoned me my repeated offences.

4th DAY: Meditations on hell and instructions on the same subject. I am fully penetrated therewith, and I tremble at the picture of hell which was placed before me. Thou art good, O my God. Thou hast pardoned the innumerable sins of my youth. Now, with the help of thy holy grace, I wish never more to offend Thee. I accept the crosses, humiliations, sacrifices, in expiation of the sins, which have grieved Thee. I will no longer complain, when I have to suffer something for Thee. Imprint on my heart, O my God, the thought of having deserved hell ; happy, if I can suffer on earth, to acquire heaven ; preserve, in my heart, O Lord, the

resolutions, which I have made in Thy presence,—they proceed from Thee: I am more tranquil, to-day. I could make my exercises, calmly and the remainder of the day was passed in great, spiritual consolations, especially at night. I seemed to be more courageous in bearing the trials, which it has pleased Our Lord to send me. What thanksgivings, O my God, for so many favors, received from Thee.

5th DAY: I dread the future, for my resolutions. I feel my weakness, when it is necessary for me to make some act of renunciation, as to my way of seeing things, and to appear content, when I am wounded by some humiliation, or by some reproach from my Superiors. Thou knowest my dispositions, O my God, Thou seest the depths of my heart; I offer this whole day to obtain contrition for the sins I have confessed; for those which I do not know and for those which have escaped my memory, Lord, have pity on me, according to thy great mercy.

My confessions are finished; calm is restored to my soul. I spent the evening before the Blessed Sacrament; I enjoyed the happiness of religious life. He has promised that He would speak to my heart. I offered Him my requests; I laid before Him the most urgent needs of the Community, which He knows far better than I. I asked Him, for the means by which I might be enabled to govern this house, with wisdom and prudence, to put a seal upon my mouth, that I might not open it, until I had thought well upon the orders I was about to give. I felt in myself a new courage. I would, as it seemed to me, do anything to preserve, the interior peace which I enjoyed at that moment. Never while in the world, did I enjoy the peace and the delight of conversing with Thee, O my God. Oh, how much to be pitied are they who do not love Thee! How Thou dost overwhelm with happiness, those who labor for Thee. “Yes, it is sweet to be attached to the service of such a Master.

6th DAY: The poverty of my Saviour touched me. I had the happiness of communicating. Oh, the house of my heart is poor, indeed, I have begged Jesus to come, having



regard only to my good will. The poor offer what they have, I offered my heart, such as it is, begging the Blessed Virgin to deign to give her company to my God, and to prepare all that is needful for the reception of so great a guest. I am calm and tranquil ; peace is in my heart, for I have received the God of peace. I am going to make the Way of the Cross, for the conversion of sinners. It is my daily practice. I have taken a resolution to make it every day of the year, if my occupations permit ; I experienced much consolation in those meditations on the Passion of my Lord.

7th DAY : I have had difficulty in collecting my thoughts. I am somewhat ill and tired, but since the eight o'clock instruction, I am better and I can say my prayers calmly.

The obedience of my God, during His whole life, and in His Passion encourages me to obey my Superiors and the Rule, blindly, and in all things, I will overcome my interior repugnances, and I shall weigh the commands that I have to give, desiring to do unto others what I would, that they should do unto me.

I asked pardon of our good God, for what I may have made my Sisters suffer by my want of reflection before deciding on anything. I am resolved to watch over myself, in a special manner and over my exterior conduct. To accept the advice of Mgr. Prince and to labor courageously to put it into practice.

8th DAY : I had the happiness of communicating and I have placed my resolutions at the feet of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors. It is for that good Mother, now to direct me. I promised that every morning I should place my day and my office, under her protection. I asked her to inspire me and to dictate to me, what I should do each day ; and every night I shall go to render her an account of all my actions, hoping that this will make me more vigilant in watching over myself, and being always on my guard. Oh, how I desire to labor for my perfection ! How much light is given to us, in a great Retreat. How many miseries I found in myself. I feel all the importance of my office. I am obliged to give an example to a whole Community. I see



very clearly that I have done nothing. Were it not for Thy help O my God, I might well be discouraged. I leave the past to the mercy of my good God. Courage, my soul, fidelity to grace will make you triumph over everything.

To-day, I have seen more clearly than ever, that I am wanting in prudence in my words and actions. I will ask these two virtues of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours, every day of the year. May heaven grant that I put into practice this resolution, which was taken by the advice of my much honored Father, Mgr. Prince.

Prudence in my words, wisdom in my actions.

Resolutions taken, the 28th of March, 1849, at the end of my annual Retreat.

#### NOTES

On My Fifth Retreat, preached, by Mgr. Bourget, Bishop of Montreal, on the 15th of March, 1850.

The eve, much occupied with the affairs of the house; indifferent to everything else, Great confidence in God, and a great desire to make the Retreat well; desire for my own reformation and that of the Community. With my whole heart, I asked of the Holy Spirit to enlighten the directors and confessors, who shall be given, as our guides. May God come to our aid, for the success of this Retreat. On the eve, discourse on our last end. The next day, the prayer at nine o'clock and at 5 o'clock, on the same subject.

What struck me most, in that prayer, were the sacrifices which Providence, imposed upon me, in my different states of life, especially in the death, of my husband, which, under the direction of Father Saint Pierre, caused me to renounce the world and devote myself to the service of the poor. All that to make me attain that which our good God wished of me, that is to say, the goal, the end which He destined for me, to save my soul; and, therefore, in a special manner to

love Mary, at the foot of the Cross, to make her honored in her sufferings. In that same year. Father Saint Pierre, made me a present of a picture of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, and every day I went to pray at the foot of that image, asking her for courage, to bear, through her example the crosses and the sacrifices which our good God sent me in the world. The greatest at that time, were the loss of a husband and a beloved child, for whom I wept every day. My heart was pierced by a sword of sorrow ; and my only consolation, was to meditate before that print, on the sorrows of my mother. Later, Mgr. Bourget, desiring that holy Mass should be said in our house, for the old and infirm women, and wishing to give us a special Patroness, sent us a picture of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors. That particular trait in the action of Providence, struck me very much. In my first journey to the United States, I saw, at the Mother House of the Sisters of Charity, a splendid statue of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, which had just arrived from France. I asked the address, and in the following year, we were able to procure a similar one, through the intervention of Vicar General Hudon, who was then setting out for Europe. That good Father, declared that he would give it to us, as a gift, if our chapel were dedicated to Our Lady of the Seven Dolors. . . . The daily sacrifices, which I have to make, are sent to make me die to myself, and save my soul To be a child of our Mother of Sorrows, one must expect to bear the Cross in this world. I will often come, then, to pray at the feet of that good Mother. I will ask her to have pity on me, in the trials and tribulations, by which I am constantly agitated, I will consider that since she has particularly chosen me for her daughter, I am obliged to console and to honor her, to propagate devotion to her, as far as possible, wherever there are Sisters of Charity of Providence.

That is what we have promised her, if we obtain, through her intercession, a statue similar to that which the good religious of Emmitsburg in the United States, have the happiness of possessing.

2nd DAY: Dryness, aridity, difficulty in bearing with myself. To hear instructions, so touching, on the sins of angels and of men and to be so little moved by these great truths. My God, how hard is my heart, and what combats are necessary before I can reach the end. How slothful and cowardly is that heart, harder than stone. Grant, if it please Thee, to awaken me from lethargy. Have mercy on me, O my God ! I abandon myself to thy great mercy.

3rd DAY: Profound reflections on my life. Oh ! my God but Thou hast been good and merciful in my regard ! Thou hast led me by the hand, through so many painful periods of my life, and I have so often betrayed Thee. So many promises to which I have been unfaithful. And in spite of that, Thou hast not ceased to follow me, in order to make me reach that place which Thou hast destined for me, from all eternity. What gratitude do I not owe Thee, for so many benefits. I should perhaps, have been lost in the world, where I daily received the reward of the works, that Thou didst inspire me to perform, by listening with too great complacency to the praises of my Hospice and my infirm, old women.

4th DAY: Meditation on judgment. In presence of all the Community, during the prayer, this morning, it seemed to me, that I was to appear before my God ; I trembled, I took a resolution to labor with all my strength so as to keep myself always in a state to appear before my Sovereign Judge.

I was frozen with terror, at the thought of sudden death. I threw myself into the arms of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors. She will help me to traverse the stormy sea of this poor life. She will sustain me in danger. That thought rendered me calm and confident.

5th DAY: On hell. The responsibility of my office as Superior, my want of submission, in the sacrifices of every day ; the difficulty which I find, in correcting infringements of the Rule, my disposition, which is sometimes, too hasty, and, again, too cowardly, the omissions in my duties which

are so far reaching, all that troubles me, at prayer and even disturbs my sleep. Thou seest, O my God, that I have given Thee my heart, without reserve and forever. Whatever it may cost me, I will labor for my perfection ; I am encouraged by the thought of heaven, which is the reward of all the sacrifices of this life.

6th DAY : In election. It was all done for me, O my God. I thank Thee for my vocation to the religious life. Thou didst decide it for me, by thy ministers. Three of them examined my vocation: thus I was convinced that it was thy will. I have never repented of having followed their advice.

7th DAY : The abuse of grace. I am always filled with confusion, when I reflect how the Lord has lead me into green pastures, and how ungrateful I have been, I, who have been loaded with so many benefits. How many holy inspirations, how many good thoughts, how many favors Thou didst bestow upon me, at the very time, when I thought least of following Thee, in the royal way of the holy Cross. O my God, I thank Thee, for having waited for me, after so much ingratitude on my part. I shall labor to make up for lost time, while Thou dost give me time. I have been the unfaithful sheep. I come with confidence to throw myself in thy arms, being assured that Thou wilt never abandon those who rely upon their promises.

8th DAY : Contrition, sorrow and repentance for the sins and imperfections of the year. Oh, I return to Thee, O Lord. Thou wilt have pity on me, Thou wilt help me to bear thy yoke, that it may become sweet and light. I dread the future, I have already made so many promises of fidelity ; but I hope and I shall not be confounded in my hope. With thy help, O God, and with the firm purpose which I have to overcome myself, I shall carry off the victory.

Resolution of my retreat of 1850, given by His Lordship, Mgr. Bourget, March 23rd, 1850.

To reform whatever is irregular in myself in the first place, and afterwards in others, never closing my eyes to any fault

through human respect, cowardice, etc., but to labor for this reform with prudence and discretion. It is God, who can give me the authority to bend every will. I must ask it of Him, day and night, through Mary and the holy patrons of the Community. O God, strengthen me in this resolution. Amen.

CERTIFICATE OF BAPTISM OF M<sup>LLE</sup> EMMELIE TAVERNIER.

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*Extract from the Register of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, in the parish of Montreal, under the invocation of the Holy Name of Mary, in the Island, County and District of Montreal, Province of Quebec, for the year 1800.*

On the 20th day of February, one thousand eight hundred, by me the under-signed priest, was baptized Marie-Emilie-Eugène, born yesterday, of the lawful marriage of Antoine Tavernier, wheelwright, and of Juliette Maurice, her father and Mother, of this parish. The godfather, was Antoine Tavernier and the godmother, Marie Claire Perrault.

Signed :

Antoine Tavernier.

Marie Claire Perrault.

HUMBERT, Priest.

MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE OF MADAME GAMELIN.

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*Extract from the Register of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, performed in the parish of Montreal, under the invocation of the Holy Name of Mary, in the Island, County and District of Montreal, Province of Quebec, for the year 1823.*

On the Fourth day of June, one thousand, eight hundred and twenty-three, after having obtained a dispensation from the three banns of marriage, from Mgr. Jean Jacques Lartigue, Bishop of Telmesse, Vicar general of the Bishop of



Quebec, I, the undersigned priest, authorized to that effect took the mutual consent, by word of mouth, of Sieur Jean Baptiste Gamelin, citizen of this city, eldest son of the late Sieur Pierre Gamelin and of Marie Josephte Lajeunesse, deceased, on the one part, and of Mlle Emilie Tavernier, eldest daughter of the late Sieur Antoine Tavernier, citizen of this city, and of Josephte Maurice, deceased, on the other part, having married them according to the laws and customs of holy Mother Church, in presence of Sieur Auguste Defoy, Sieur François Tavernier, brother of the bride, Joseph Perrault Esquire, and Sieur Julien Tavernier.

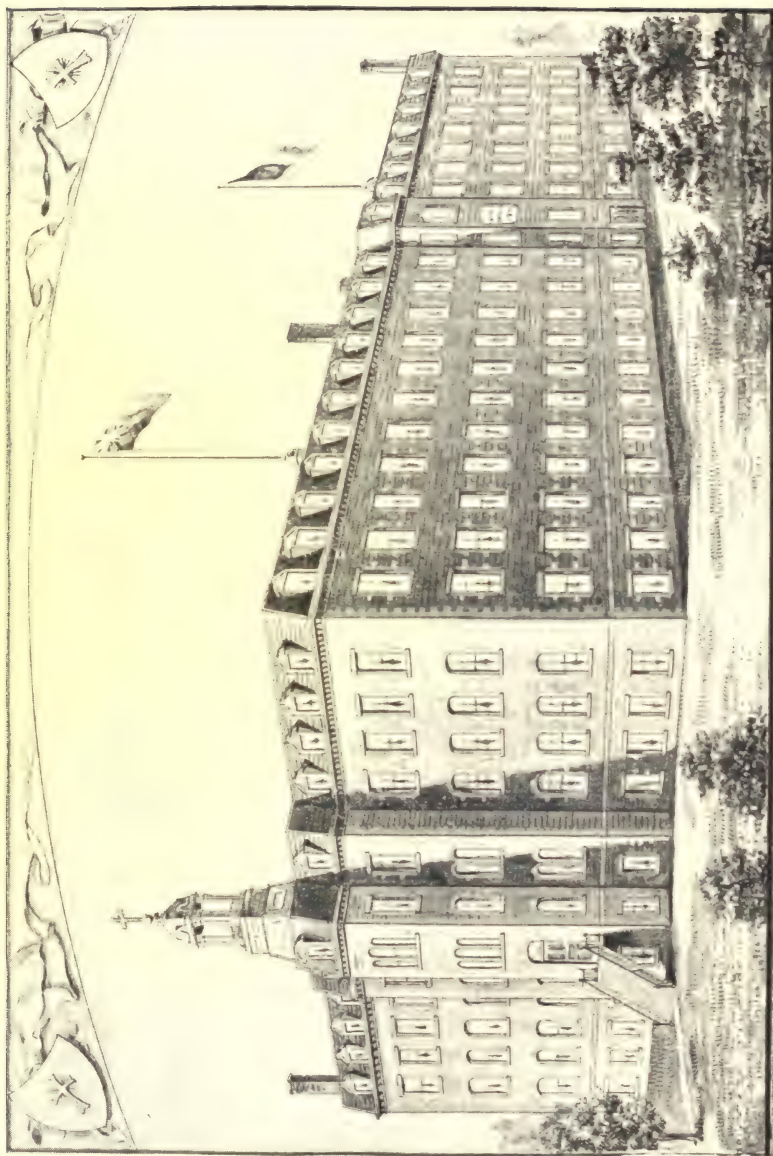
Signed :

	Emilie Tavernier,
	Jean Baptiste Gamelin,
Joseph Perrault,	Auguste Defoy,
François Tavernier,	Marie Anne Cuvillier,
Genevieve Tavernier,	

BREGUIER DE SAINT PIERRE, Priest.







VIEW OF THE HOSPICE GAMELIN,  
Completed in 1894

## SECOND APPENDIX

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Extract from *la Semaine religieuse* of Montreal,  
8th June, 1895.

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### CURE

OBTAINED THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF MOTHER GAMELIN,  
FOUNDRESS AND FIRST SUPERIOR OF THE SISTERS  
OF CHARITY OF PROVIDENCE.

In 1888, that is to say a year after my profession, I suffered from severe throat trouble, necessitating several operations. Cured of that complaint. In 1893, I was seized soon afterwards, with severe pain in the chest and lungs. An obstinate cough and general weakness, seemed to me, certain symptoms of consumption. I remained in that state of languor, until the disease began to enter on a new phase, in the swelling of the right leg, and soon after, a sore on the sole of the foot. It was in vain that they made me follow the most drastic treatment, the sore proved impervious to treatment and was constantly growing worse.

Weary of the struggle, the physicians at last, declared the wound incurable,

It was then I had an inspiration to ask God, for my cure, through the intercession of our venerated Mother Gamelin. Having obtained permission from our Mother General, who sent me a relic of our dear Foundress, I began a novena on Saturday, April 29th, and immediately gave up using all remedies. My confidence was such that despite my sufferings which became more intense every day, and despite the progress of the sore, which by that time, extended to the upper part of my foot and a portion of the leg, I was, nevertheless, more and more convinced, that I should be cured.

"You are doing that to try my faith, good Mother Gamelin," I said to her, "you are certainly going to cure me; for it is impossible that a mother should not have pity on her child. I do not deserve that favor, but all the same, perform a splendid miracle and do not leave me lame." For it may be remarked that the bad leg had grown shorter.

My daily invocations were: "Mother Gamelin, cure me. My God, glorify thy servant."

On Sunday morning, May 5th, the last day of the novena, my sore foot was in the same condition, that is to say, swollen and the pain so very great, that I had to put on it, a cloth soaked in vaseline, to enable me to bear the bandage.

I went to holy communion before Mass, and spent the time of my thanksgiving in repeating the above mentioned invocations. At the moment of the Elevation, I felt an indescribable pain in the sole of my foot, then an internal movement, that seemed like a total displacement of that part. At Communion, I instinctively looked down at my leg and I saw that the bandage was altogether unbound. Trembling with hope and emotion, I took it off and found that poor leg, in its normal condition: no more swelling, no more running sore, but only the scars to attest the instantaneous miracle which had just taken place. I immediately got up and ran to our Mother saying to her: "Mother, I am cured." "Silence," she answered, to prevent me from disturbing the recollection of



the holy place. My heart swelling with emotion, I was obliged to restrain the transports of my gratitude which I had great difficulty in repressing. When Mass was ended, it was very sweet for me, to proclaim the powerful intervention of our dear Mother Gamelin, and to show my Sisters, who crowded round from everywhere, the proofs of my entire cure, so that they might share in my joy.

I put on my shoes, and began to walk as before, to the great amazement of those who had so long seen me in a wheeled chair. I never feel any more pain: in a word I am perfectly cured.

Sister Lucain.  
In the world, Jane Morrison.

Providence, Mother House, Montreal, May 5th, 1895.

#### TESTIMONY OF THE PHYSICIAN.

I, the undersigned physician, certify to having treated, for two years, the Reverend Sister Lucain, professed religious of the Institute of the Sisters of Charity of Providence, in Montreal, for various affections, which I considered incurable; amongst others, for a sore, that resisted all treatment.

And I declare, by these presents, that I have satisfied myself that the said Sister Lucain was suddenly and completely cured, after the Communion which she received on that day, at the end of a novena, made to obtain her cure, through the intercession of the Reverend Mother Gamelin of the Sisters of Charity of Providence, in Montreal.

J. A. Leblanc, M. D.

Montreal, May 29th, 1895.

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Extract from *La Semaine Religieuse*, of Montreal, November 2nd, 1895.

### NEW CURE

OBTAINED THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF THE REVEREND  
MOTHER GAMELIN.

In the month of December, 1890, I began to suffer from violent headaches and very sharp pains in the heels and along the vertebral column, with stiffness of the muscles of the neck, back and legs. I saw the Doctor, who upon examination, declared that I was suffering from inflammation of the spinal marrow.

In May, 1891, I was obliged to take to bed and to follow a drastic treatment, as a result of which I was able to drag myself painfully about, supported by crutches.

On the 18th of March, 1892, I was made to put on shoes, having heels three inches in thickness. But these heels only served to maintain my equilibrium, and to prevent me from falling backwards. It was then, that the physician declared that the disease was incurable, and that I must resign myself to remain infirm.

What a gloomy prospect... At twenty-three years of age, to find myself reduced to inaction, and the tedium of a long life, mournful and monotonous, between the four walls of the infirmary.

To drive away these gloomy thoughts and to revive my spirits with the possibility of a cure, my Superiors sent me to one of the country missions, giving me some hope that the good air would renew my strength. I was sent to the missions of Mascouche, but the change did not in any way improve my condition. My sufferings were so great that the physician of that place, was obliged to prescribe fly blisters to relieve me.

In September, 1895, I felt a strong inspiration to ask for my cure through the mediation of our venerated Mother Gamelin. Our Mother General encouraged me to do so, sending me a relic of that dear Mother Foundress: it was a little cross made from some threads of her belt. On the 15th September, I began a novena, with all the household of the mission of Mascouche, which was to end on the 23rd, the forty-fourth anniversary of the death of Mother Gamelin. Thenceforth I felt myself animated with so great a confidence, that my cure appeared to be certain. "Mother Gamelin," I cried very often during the day, "you who were so full of compassion for the most miserable, have pity on me, cure me. My God, glorify thy servant."

On Monday, the 23rd September, the last day of my novena, I made my Communion, and to commemorate the special devotion of our dear Mother Foundress to Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, seven Sisters and seven pupils communicated for my intentions.

After Communion, I retired to the sacristy, in order to give free rein to the sentiments with which I was animated, and so as not to disturb those present I took off my shoes, and made an offering of them to Mother Gamelin, saying: "Good Mother, take my shoes, as a present for your Feast Day. You cannot refuse me, since one cannot refuse a gift." After that offering, I finished my novena, repeating alternatively: "My God, I do not deserve a miracle. Good Mother Gamelin, will you not hear me!"

I was so anxious for my cure, that I tried to stand up at the Sanctus, but my heels refused to support me, and I had to sit down again. "It is true, dear Mother," I murmured, with a sigh, "that I have anticipated the hour; for I asked you to cure me at the Elevation." At the moment of the Elevation, I felt so strong a pressure on the back of my head, that I nearly fell, "Good Mother," I cried, deeply moved and trembling, "you are going to cure me. Thanks."

At that moment, a sudden transformation made itself felt in my whole being. No more suffering, no more stiffness, but an undefinable sense of well being.

I fell on my knees, — which I had not been able to do since 1892 — then I rose, and supported myself, without difficulty on my heels; in a word I was cured....

When Mass was ended, I sent for the Superior. On seeing her, I fell on my knees, and said: "Sister, I am cured." Immediately they brought me ordinary shoes, and I began to walk, as formerly, to the great astonishment of the Sisters and pupils, who had so often supported me, and helped me to walk. From that day, I was able to walk well, all trace of the disease having disappeared.

Sister Marcienne.

In the world, Vaillancourt.

Providence Mother House,  
Montreal, October 21st, 1895.

#### CERTIFICATE.

St. Henri de Mascouche, September 23rd, 1895.

I, the undersigned, certify, that Sister Marcienne, religious of the Sisters of Charity of Providence, attacked by an inflammation of the spinal marrow, in the cervical region, could not be cured except by a miracle; treatment being of no effect, in the condition in which she was. After a novena made to Mother Gamelin, at the moment of the Elevation, during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, she suddenly felt herself cured, and could kneel and walk like any one else, neither of which she had been able to do for nearly five years.

Jôs. Renaud, M. D.

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## CERTIFICATE.

I, Jacques Augustin Leblanc physician, practicing in Montreal, certify to having treated Sister Marcienne, religious of the Community of the Sisters of Providence, for locomotor ataxis, for several years, from 1890.

In spite of every attention, the disease could not be conquered. By a slight improvement she was able to walk painfully, with the help of a particular shoe. Since the above mentioned period, the disease has always remained in the same state. I considered the disease incurable, when on the 23rd of last September, Sister Marcienne, was suddenly and completely cured, at the moment of the Elevation, on the last day of the novena which she made to Mother Gamelin, for the obtaining of her cure.

Some days after I was called in, to verify this cure, which I do not hesitate, to call miraculous.

J. A. Leblanc, M. D.

Montreal, October 23rd, 1895.

## ANOTHER CURE.

On the 11th October, 1895, Marie Philomene Alfreda, twelfth child of Ferdinand Trudel, mason, and of Elmira Bernard, residing in the parish of St. Vincent de Paul, Montreal, was radically cured after a novena made to Mother Gamelin. Here are the facts.

Alfreda then aged nine, had been since her sixth year, attacked by a disease of the bones, which, while suffering great pain, had obliged her to keep her bed, for a whole year. Her parents, despite their slender means, spared nothing to obtain her cure. The child was therefore examined and treated by several specialists, who all agreed in declaring the case



incurable. In 1894, the child was able to sit down, but keeping herself bent forwards, and supported on her elbows.

The poor little invalid was obliged to remain, continually in that painful position, having no other prospect than that of suffering, and of being infirm as it seemed, for her whole life.

With an intelligence more fully developed than other children of her age, Alfreda fully understood her unfortunate situation. At nine years old, she began to be anxious about her First Communion. She said tearfully to her parents: "I will never be able to go up to the railing, like other children." "I will carry you there, my daughter," answered the father; and encouraged by those words, the dear child took up with new ardor the study of her Catechism, under the direction of the Reverend Sisters of the Congregation de Notre Dame, at St. Catherine's Academy, where she was brought every day, in a little carriage, which served her as a seat, during the time, she remained in class.

One day, it was the 2nd of October, 1895, a person, who was touched by the pitiable state of the little invalid, said to her: "My child, I have known many people, who like you were unable to walk, cured by the intercession of the Mother Gamelin after a novena to Our Lady of the Seven Dolors. I am sure, that that Mother who had so much pity for the infirm, will cure you also." Alfreda, radiant with hope, went home and that very evening, the family gathered round the child, to begin the novena of prayers. The poor little one, did not content herself with the prayers said in common, but repeated them to herself several times, in the day. On the fifth day of the novena, the little sufferer felt a sensible improvement and was able to stand up. Her father had to go away that day, to work at Pointe aux Trembles.

"When you come back," said Alfreda to him, "I will go to meet you at the door."

That promise was verified. When he came back, the happy child went to meet her father; she could walk perfectly well.

Inexpressible was the joy of the family, and the dear Mother Gamelin received the homage of a well merited gratitude.

### CERTIFICATE.

We, the undersigned, do certify and declare, by these presents, that the recital which describes the cure of the child Alfreda, is in perfect conformity with the truth, and that these details are the faithful expression of the testimony given to the Sisters of Providence, at the Mother House.

In proof of which, we have affixed our signatures in Montreal, on the 11th day of February, 1896.

Ferdinand Trudel,  
Elmira Bernard.

### ANOTHER CURE.

OBTAINED THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF MOTHER GAMELIN.

I suffered for fifteen years, with dyspepsia, which no medicine had any power to relieve, and which was the cause of many disorders in my system. I could only take a little milk or broth. From the 13th November, 1895, the symptoms became aggravated : I could no longer digest anything. My weakness was so great, the pain in my stomach so severe, that I was obliged to keep my bed. On the 11th December, I was so weak, that the Doctor thought it prudent to have me administered, saying that in the condition in which I was, I might die at any moment.

On the day that I received Extreme Unction, I began a novena to Mother Gamelin. The superior gave me a little relic of that dear Mother, bidding me ask for my cure. That was on Wednesday. The following day I grew worse. In the night between Saturday and Sunday, the pains in the stomach were so severe, that I could find no position which gave me any relief. Weary of suffering, I cried out, "Mother Gamelin, cure me. You know that this was the day on which you were to cure me; obtain for me, I beg of you that I may get a little rest."

It was then midnight. Soon afterwards, I fell asleep, and did not awake until four o'clock in the morning, perfectly well. I got up for the first Mass, which was at half past five o'clock. I went up to the railing for Communion. During Mass, I felt a ravenous hunger: however, I assisted at the second Mass, which was said at half past six; then I went to breakfast, with the appetite of a person in good health. Next day, I took a fairly long drive in a carriage, without any fatigue. From that time on, I have resumed my ordinary occupations, without a moment's illness. Gratitude to our venerated Mother Gamelin.

In proof of which I have signed,

Sister Elmire Groleau,

Tertiary.

House of Providence,

Belœil, January 24th, 1896.

#### CERTIFICATE.

Belœil, Jan. 24th, 1896.

I certify to having treated Sister Groleau, Tertiary, for dyspepsia, which resisted all treatment, and to having discover-

ed, to my great astonishment, a sensible improvement, after the Communion made at the end of the novena for her cure, through the intercession of the Reverend Mother Gamelin, Foundress of the Sisters of Charity of the Providence, of Montreal.....

M. Perrault, M. D.

## CURE

OF SISTER ERNEST, IN THE WORLD, ROSE ANNA LANCTOT,  
RELIGIOUS OF PROVIDENCE.

Admitted to the Novitiate of the Providence, on the 28th February, 1882, I found myself, in September 1889, attacked by erysipelas, of so serious a nature, that after five days illness, I was administered.

The disease was controlled, but I remained in such a state of weakness and languor, with frequent headaches, and continual pain in the vertebral column.

On the 20th of March, 1891, I again took to bed, where I had to remain continuously until the month of November. Then I was able to walk, but with crutches, which I exchanged in April 1892, for shoes, with heels, three inches thick.

I spent two years in the mission of Joliette, after which I returned to the Deaf and Dumb Institute, where I could give some help in the pharmacy. In the month of April, 1895, I was seized with severe bronchitis, which left me so weak, that I was obliged to resume my crutches, finding it so hard to walk. I spent a month in the Infirmary at the Mother House, and got a little better.

At that time, took place, the annual Retreat for the novices, which I followed miserably, not having been able to take part in that of the professed. That Retreat ended on the 21st of November.

Next day, our Mother Marie Godefroy, Superior General, when visiting the sick Sisters, said to me, speaking very earnestly: "Sister Ernest, you must get cured to go to Oregon."

Surprised at this command, and being unable to think of any answer, I went to the chapel, and knelt there; trembling all over, I said this prayer: "Thou dost then will that I should make the sacrifice of going to that distant mission." And addressing Mother Gamelin, I said to her: "Good Mother, you must cure me. You see the extreme need of our Sisters in Oregon. Can you refuse me when you see that it is the wish of our Mother General. If you were still on earth, would you not like me to obey you." Nevertheless, I felt a strong repugnance to becoming a missionary, and I spent part of the night, asking myself if there might not be other sacrifices, which would take the place of that demanded of me. But, Alas, vain hope; the missions of the West were always in my thoughts. Then, remembering that I was but a poor orphan, whom the Community had received gratuitously, I realized that I must no longer hesitate to render it the service, which obedience at that moment demanded. From that time forth, my choice was made and the next morning, I went to offer myself to our Mother, for that distant expedition.

"That is good," answered our Mother, "now that your sacrifice is made Mother Gamelin will cure you. Make a seven days' prayer to obtain that favor."

I then resumed my ordinary prayers, for I had already made eight novenas to our dear Mother Foundress, but without success. These prayers consisted in reciting seven Hail Maries, with the personal invocation, "Mother Gamelin, cure me." On the 29th, the last of the seven days, I heard holy Mass, with the intimate conviction that I was going to be cured. During the Holy Sacrifice, I felt an intense and unusual pain, which passed along the spinal column, and in general over my whole body.

At the Communion of the priest, I experienced a strange sense of well being. All pain had disappeared and I succeeded



in resting on my heels. I could no longer doubt that I was at that moment cured, and I was impatient to give myself unequivocal proofs of that fact.

After Mass, I made all haste to present myself at our Mother General's door, holding in my hands my poor shoes, with their heels three inches high, and said to her with indescribable emotion : " Mother, I am cured. "

The good news soon spread through the house, and I saw myself surrounded and greeted by my Sisters, who wept with joy and gratitude for this new favor, granted through the intervention of our beloved Mother Foundress. Yes, it was really true, my poor heels, could rest, at last as of old on the floor. I could walk freely and without pain. I was, in a word, restored to health.

In proof of which I have signed the present declaration, this 2nd day of March, 1896.

Sister Ernest,  
Sister of Charity of Providence.

#### CERTIFICATE.

" I, the undersigned, physician, certify to having treated Sister Ernest of the Institute of Sisters of Charity of Providence, for locomotor ataxis, from the 30th of March, 1891, to the month of November 1895, and without success.

I considered the disease incurable and my opinion had been long since formed, when on the 1st December, I was astonished to see Sister Ernest walking the same as her companions. Her cure, which I consider miraculous, had taken place suddenly, on the 29th November, that is to say two days previous.

J. A. Leblanc, M. D.

Montreal, July 28th, 1896.

## ANOTHER CURE.

A sick woman, the wife of a soldier, had undergone an operation, before coming to us, but the Doctor found her so ill that he brought her to our hospital and told her husband that he must operate again, although with very little chance of success. There was no great risk involved, since according to the opinions of the Doctors, she could not live long, in the state in which she was.

At the moment of her arrival in the Hospital, I had just received a photograph of Mother Gamelin. I had an inspiration to place it in the sick woman's room. For I knew she was Irish and a fervent Catholic. After having communicated to her, the cures attributed to the powerful intercession in heaven, of our dear Mother Foundress, I said to her :

" Have confidence, Madame, we are going to begin a Novena to Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, and Mother Gamelin must obtain your cure, without having to undergo an operation.

Our confidence was not in vain. The patient was soon conscious of a sensible improvement, and the astonished Doctor did not know to what to attribute so extraordinary a change. At the present time, the sick woman is well, and cannot sufficiently thank her benefactress.

Glory and love to the venerated Mother Gamelin.

Sister Bernardine of Sienna,

Superior.

St. Joseph's Hospital.

























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